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HOAX CALL ABOUT ACTIVE SHOOTER IN COLLEGE LIBRARY LEAVES COMMUNITY REELING

By ABIGAIL CHANG
Editor in Chief

ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The lobby of the Davis Family Library.

Piper Boss '23 was working at a carrel in Davis Family Library on Sunday night when she received a text from her friend, Molly Grazioso '23.5 at 10:41 p.m.

"Theres a shooter. Or something," Grazioso wrote. "Piper stay where u r. Get udner something now. Now. Im serious please stay where u are. Im with the pilice. Im safe. Can u confirm youre ok?"

While Boss worked in a carrel room on the third floor mezzanine — the highest level of the library — law enforcement officers from the Middlebury Police Department and other agencies from across the state had entered the lower floors of the building. MPD officers arrived at the college library around 10:30 p.m., responding to a 911 call alleging an ongoing shooting and mass casualty incident in the building, according to an MPD press release.

The call has since been identified as a hoax or "swatting call," a false report in which an individual attempts to get law enforcement to converge on the scene of a fabricated threat.

The college received a call at 10:28 p.m. about a possible active shooter, Director of Public Safety Demitria Kirby said in an email to The Campus. At the time, they were told by law enforcement that "there was a low probability the threat was credible."

"Middlebury's Crisis Management Team was actively weighing whether sending a community-wide message at a moment when the unsubstantiated situation might have been localized and contained would cause more harm than good," Kirby wrote to The Campus.

After the team became aware that information about the incident was spreading throughout campus and beyond, they sent an alert a little before midnight to notify the community that law enforcement was responding and the threat was likely not credible, Kirby added. The message went out after students had already been evacuated from the library, students in the building on Sunday night told The Campus.

After receiving Grazioso's text, Boss hid under a desk in the back of the carrel room, waiting for police to find her.

"I just tried to be as quiet and still as possible," she said. "It took about 30 minutes until they got to my room, and I was just waiting and hiding and hoping that the automatic lights in the room would turn off soon."

Grazioso, who had been doing work with Boss in the same carrel room, had headed to the bathroom before the two planned to leave the library for the night. She and Grazioso both described hearing yelling from what seemed to be the library lobby, three floors below them, but dismissed it, thinking it might be a student protest or a minor disturbance in the lobby — earlier in the year, a local man had entered the library and loudly proclaimed he was running for president in 2026 before being escorted out of the building.

> "I just tried to be as quiet and still as possible... I was just waiting and hiding and hoping that the automatic lights in the room would turn off soon."

But as Grazioso rounded the corner of the stairs on her way to the bathroom, she found herself standing above an armed officer in tactical gear on the landing below her.

"I turned the corner of the staircase, and I see that at the bottom of the stairs there's a woman with a huge, huge gun pointed straight at me," Grazioso said.

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College implements new programs to balance enrollment next year

By TIFFANY LI
Staff Writer

Middlebury plans to continue housing students in the Inn on the Green next year for the third fall semester in a row, due to an unusually small graduating class and uneven number of students studying abroad. The college has offered a $2,000 travel reimbursement for anyone willing to switch their spring study abroad semester to the fall, which about 20 students have accepted.

"This spring, we have approximately 2,550 students on campus. We expect that this number will grow in the fall," wrote Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Michelle McCauley in an email to faculty and staff.

McCauley noted that Middlebury's ideal undergraduate enrollment is between 2,500 and 2,600 students. The college estimates a typical size for the incoming first-year class with around 630 students — although admitted students have until May 1 to accept their offers — the college still expects a "larger than usual overall enrollment" in the fall. One contributing factor to increased enrollment is that many students chose to take leaves of absence during the pandemic and, thus, are graduating later.

"Our commitment to offering flexibility to our students as they navigated the pandemic has resulted in an unexpectedly modest number of students (about 420) who will graduate in May, and, relatedly, a large group of students (more than 200, instead of the usual 100) who are expected to graduate in February 2024," McCauley wrote.

Students are also disproportionately choosing to study abroad in the spring instead of in the fall, contributing to the increased number of students on Middlebury's campus during the fall semester. Carlos Vélez, dean of international experiences, told The Campus in an email that his office projected a difference of around 130 students between the two semesters.

"Currently, we are projecting about 195 [students studying abroad] for fall semester and 325 for spring semester. It's just a more significant imbalance than in previous years," Vélez wrote. "Since the pandemic, our spring numbers have typically been 80 students higher than in the fall semester. Prior to the pandemic, it was closer to a difference of 25."

In response to this unusually large disparity, the college offered a $2,000 travel reimbursement to incentivize students to study away from campus in the fall. Students were eligible for the reimbursement whether they chose to switch their study abroad semester from spring to fall, spent a full academic year abroad or spent the fall semester at Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) or another domestic program.

"We had about 20 students who made this switch," Vélez wrote. The reimbursement is expected to be a

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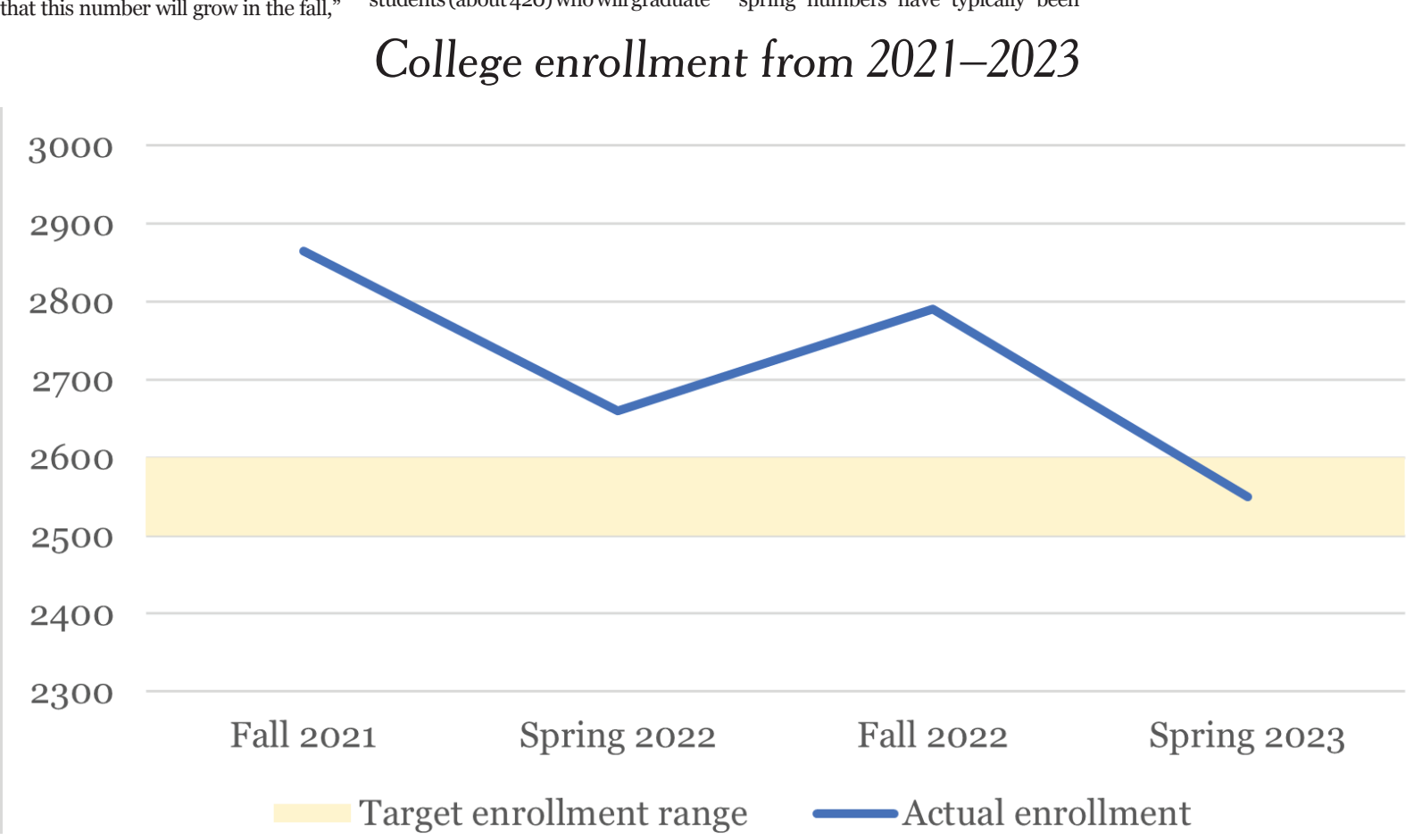

Faculty approve the creation of statistics major

By LILY JONES
Senior News Editor

The Mathematics Department, soon to be called the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, will now be home to a new statistics major. On Friday, April 7, Middlebury faculty voted to approve the new major with a vote of 68 to 26. The faculty discussed the proposal for over an hour before the vote.

Psychology Professor Mike Dash is on the Educational Affairs Committee (EAC) and has been working closely with the Mathematics Department on their proposal of the new major ahead of the faculty vote. The faculty vote was supposed to take place in February but was delayed until April to allow the EAC to write up a formal recommendation and the Mathematics Department to revise their proposal based on feedback they receive from the EAC.

"Students should be able to graduate with a major in statistics starting next academic year," Dash said.

Alex Lyford is one of the mathematics professors who worked on the proposal.

"Students interested in majoring in statistics or wanting to learn more about our statistics and data science offerings can reach out to any of our statisticians — Professors Lyford, Tang, Malcolm-White or Peterson," Lyford said on behalf of the whole department.

"We hope that this major and the courses within it allow students at Middlebury to explore how data, probabilistic thinking and mathematics can help us solve some of the world's most challenging and interesting problems," Lyford said.

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Hoax call about active shooter in college library leaves community reeling

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The officer told Grazioso that she needed to come with her, Grazioso explained, but she was still hesitant, even after the officer showed her her badge.

"At this point, I don't know if I can trust her, but I still am — I'm kind of in a helpless position right now," Grazioso recalled. " I don't have any other choice. So I start just pleading with her, and I say, 'Please don't hurt me. Please don't hurt me. Do you promise me you won't hurt me? Just please keep promising, promise, promise, promise,' as I'm walking down the stairs towards her."

Other students The Campus spoke with described being unsure if the people that found them throughout the building were real police, or if they could be armed individuals posing as law enforcement to draw students from their hiding places.

"I think my biggest fear at the time, or what was really going through my mind was, 'How am I supposed to know when to come out? How do I know if it's the police telling me to come out?'" Boss said.

> "I think my biggest fear at the time, or what was really going through my mind was, 'How am I supposed to know when to come out? How do I know if it's the police telling me to come out?'"

of the library opposite the printer room. Several minutes later, another officer told him to stay down and move quickly across the library lobby area — which the second-floor balcony overlooks — to get to the printer room where other students were sheltering.

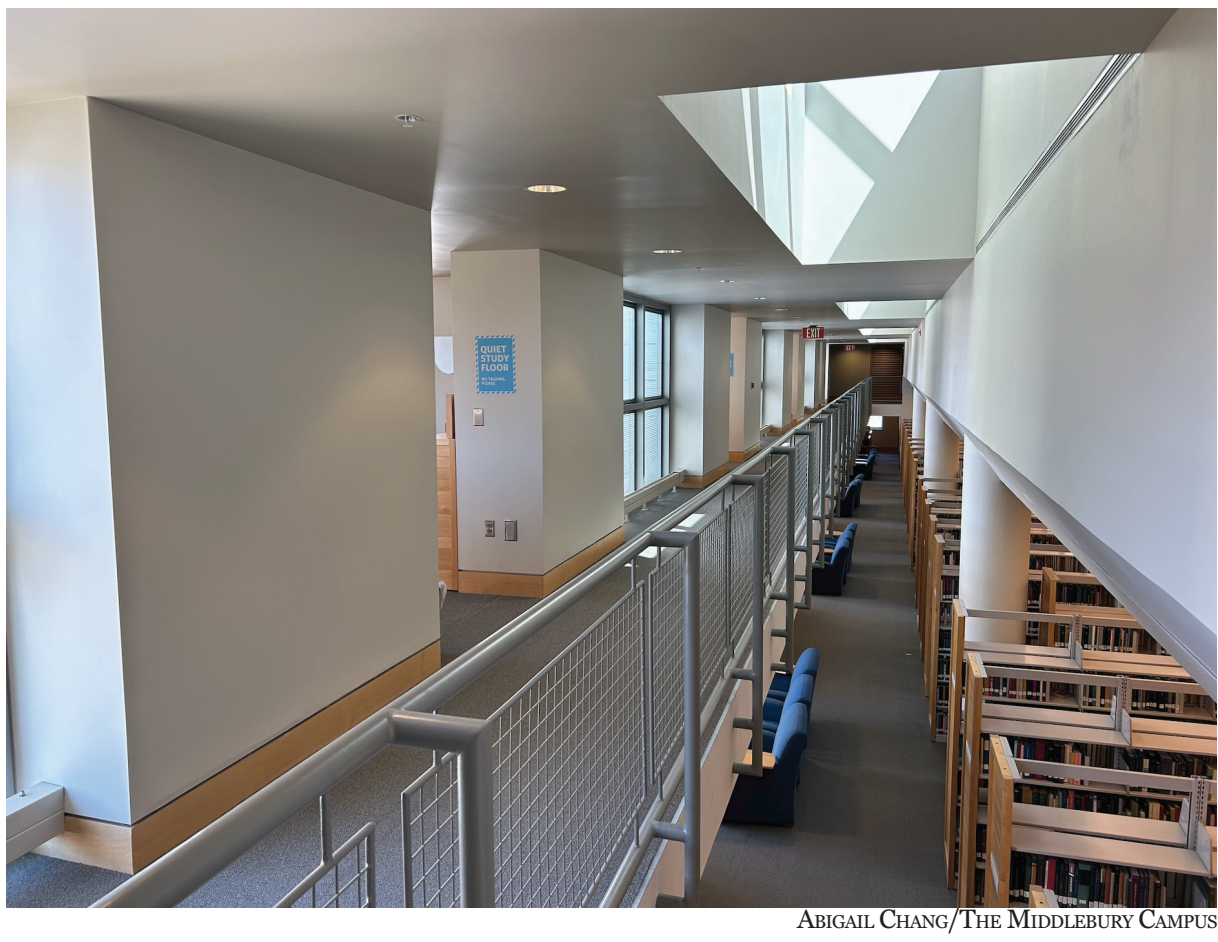
> "They pointed their rifles at me, and they said, 'Don't move. Hands up. Show me your hands."

"I felt pretty nervous because of how professionally they were taking this issue," Pu said. "It's kind of weird because police pointing a gun at you and saying, 'Show me your hands,' it's like a movie scene, right?" he added.

MPD officers and officers from the Vermont State Police (VSP) New Haven Barracks, a VSP Tactical Services Unit, the Vergennes Police Department, the Rutland County Sheriff's Department and the Castleton Police Department worked to search the building and evacuate students. Upwards of 20 officers responded to the call, according to Boe.

Middlebury Regional Emergency Medical Services also responded to the call. "They were ready to go and pick up or recover injured and wounded people — if there were any. Obviously, in this case, there weren't any," Boe said.

Boe noted that protocol for responding to active shooter calls has changed since he first started on the force 24 years ago. "When we first arrived at one of these calls, I think the rule back then was like, you wait for five people [law enforcement officers] to show up, and then you enter," he explained. "And then it became three people and you enter, and now, of course, the rule is that whoever shows up enters immediately."



ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The third floor mezzanine, where Boss and Grazioso were working.

TONY SJODIN/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Police cars parked outside of the library on Sunday night.

Protocol

Grazioso, and later Boss, were both relocated to areas of the library that were being guarded by armed officers. Law enforcement worked to identify a safe route through the building that they knew was clear before they began to move students through it, eventually evacuating them out of the building, MPD Sergeant Vegar Boe told The Campus in an interview Monday.

Many students described being relocated to the first-floor printer room as they waited to be evacuated. ZZ Pu '23, one of the students relocated to the room, estimated that roughly 40 students in total were moved into the room. He was one of the first students in the space and said he spent about 30 minutes there — students in the room were evacuated after officers finished searching the basement, first and second floors.

Pu started to make his way downstairs from the second floor, where he had been studying, after he heard shouting and spotted an officer with a rifle on the floor below. As he was coming down the stairs, two officers moved towards him.

"They pointed their rifles at me, and they said, 'Don't move. Hands up. Show me your hands,'" Pu recalled.

Pu followed their directions, descending the stairs on the side of the library opposite the printer room. Several minutes later, another officer told him to stay down and move quickly across the library lobby area — which the second-floor balcony overlooks — to get to the printer room where other students were sheltering.

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Two MPD officers were the first to arrive on the scene and begin searching — arriving at the building five minutes after the hoax call, according to Director of Public Safety Demitria Kirby. Under the current protocol, Boe explained, the first officer or officers to arrive begin the search and work to coordinate with any other officers who arrive later so they can cover the maximum area possible.

"And then you continue searching until either the whole building has been covered or the threat has been stopped," Boe said.

Footage from the Davis Family Library MiddCam, a camera that live streams the front of the library at all hours, showed squad cars arriving and parking at the back of the library around 10:30 p.m. Later, individuals who appeared to be law enforcement were visible doing sweeps of the interior of the building and the library roof. At around 12:10 a.m. on Monday morning, the cam showed a number of people who seemed to be law enforcement exiting the building with flashlights.

False-report calls have been increasing in frequency at schools throughout the U.S., with individuals calling in false bomb threats or shooting incidents in an attempt to get law enforcement, or even a SWAT team, to respond. Law enforcement responded to similar hoax calls about active shooters at Boston University, Syracuse University and Wake Forest University on Sunday night. In light of this cluster of swatting calls, the investigation of the incident at Middlebury has been turned over to the FBI, Boe said.

Communication

Though police responded to the swatting call at 10:30 p.m., students inside and outside of the building did not receive word from the college about what was happening for nearly the entire time officers were searching and evacuating the building. The college sent an emergency alert through the MiddAlert system at 11:53 p.m., notifying students of the situation via text, email and phone call.

"There has been a report of an active shooter at the Davis Famiy [sic] Library on campus. Police officers are on scene and are searching the library. So far, they have not found anything and this does not appear to be a credible threat. Shelter in place until further notice. We will provide more information once it becomes available," the email message read.

An automated MiddAlerts phone call told students that campus was in lockdown due to an active shooter reported in Davis and instructed them to "use run, fight, hide procedures." While such procedures might be familiar to many students — many U.S. schools have regular lockdown and active shooter drills — some noted that not everyone had received such training.

Arthur Martins '23.5, an international student, said he had never done a lockdown or active shooter drill before. After he heard about the events unfolding at Davis from a group chat he was in, he turned to his housemates to learn more about how to proceed.

"My housemates were all kind of used to it, it seemed," Martins said. "I don't have a language to understand what's happening, and I didn't know what I should do."

Together, the group shut the blinds, turned out the lights and hunkered down in a room together. Since then, Martins said he has been doing research and trying to learn what to do in threat scenarios like the one reported at the library. On Monday, he spoke with an employee at the library, asking for resources and information about what to do. The employee toured him around the library, pointing out where he could go should he need to hide or escape.

The college does not do lockdown or active shooter drills, though Martins noted he did have to do a required online training when he matriculated in 2017. The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey offered a training session last week on April 4.

Boss and Grazioso noted that the initial MiddAlert notification came well after they had both been evacuated from the building, had their information and stories taken down by officers on the scene, and had been released back to their residence.

"It was definitely interesting for us because, for us, the threat felt completely over by the time that that was sent out," Grazioso said, referring to herself and Boss.

Information about what was happening in Davis spread rapidly via messages from students inside the building and social media posts about the situation. On the anonymous message board Yik Yak, students shared information, speculation and memes, with many wondering why they had not received an emergency alert telling them to shelter in place — or at least to stay away from the library.

Pu, who was texting friends from inside the building, noted that he ran into two friends on Monday who had been on their way to the library while law enforcement were searching the building.

"So while the argument is that we should delay the alert systems so that the students inside Davis could be safe, I felt bad for whoever was walking toward Davis at the [time of the] incident, and they could have been alerted," Pu said.

In the Middlebury Parents Facebook Group, parents traded information about the unfolding situation and criticized the lack of immediate communication to students from the college. "My daughter is with a friend in Battell and only info they have received is from friends texting them. Where is the campus alert system?!?" one parent wrote at 11:12 p.m.

Students inside the library also noted that they might not have known what was happening had it not been for messages from friends. Boss was not aware that there was a threat of an active shooter in the building until she received Grazioso's text.

"If I hadn't gotten that text from Molly [Grazioso], I would have just kept doing work," Boss said. "I'm sure eventually I would have been like, 'Why is there so much commotion?' But the thing is, the yelling — it wasn't a lot of commotion. It was just abnormally loud voices for the library."

Initial information about how students around campus should proceed also spread through unofficial channels. Grazioso said she texted her housemates and told them there were reports of an active shooter in the library and that they should shelter in place. "Everyone in my townhouse shut the blinds, turned off the lights and had shoes and sweatshirts and were ready to evacuate if they needed to," she said.

The events of Sunday night might result in changes to the emergency alert system.

"The Crisis Management Team is reviewing its protocols considering last night's situation: weighing whether to use Rave [MiddAlert] alerts even for unsubstantiated reports of this nature, and more precisely defining what a 'substantial emergency response presence on campus' means," Kirby told The Campus. The college recently tested the emergency alert system on April 4, with notifications going out to students a little before 1:30 p.m.

College community members received an "all clear" message a little before 12:30 a.m. on Monday, lifting the shelter-in-place order. A little before 7 a.m. on Monday morning, college administrators sent an all-school email addressing the events of the previous night — broadly outlining the situation, thanking law enforcement and sharing a list of resources and support options for students. The college sent a similar message to parents.

The college also asked professors to be lenient with students who needed to miss class or delay assignments while they process the events of Sunday night.

"I'm just really thankful that there was no real threat and everyone's OK," Grazioso said.

Many students tried to return to normal routines on Monday, attending class or spending time outside on one of the first warm days of the spring.

> "The feelings I was experiencing with the threat last night and walking around campus with the great weather today and seeing people hanging out and all the prospective students just enjoying the sun, it felt like a jarring image."

"The feelings I was experiencing with the threat last night and walking around campus with the great weather today and seeing people hanging out and all the prospective students just enjoying the sun, it felt like a jarring image," Martins said.

One student, who asked to remain anonymous given the sensitivity of the situation, was on the first floor of the library when law enforcement entered the building and asked them to put their hands up. They noted that they are still feeling an abnormal sense of tension.

"It's going to take me, I think, a few days to recover and then enjoy the sun outside," the student said.

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Monday, April 10.

History of Art and Architecture Department hires first specialist in art of Africa and the African Diaspora

By RACHEL LU
Editor at Large

The History of Art and Architecture Department recently announced that Marguerite Lenius has accepted an assistant professor position, specializing in the art of Africa and the African Diaspora. Lenius is the first professor covering art from the African continent and diaspora at the college.

This is the culmination of a multi-year process for the department to hire its first Africanist. According to Associate Professor and Department Chair of History of Art and Architectural Studies Edward Vazquez, the department previously underwent an unsuccessful search to hire a two-year Africanist position. Two years ago, the department was approved to hire a tenure-track professor, which led to the search this year that resulted in Lenius' hiring.

Lenius had a non-traditional path to becoming an art historian. She was originally trained in theater and started her own nonprofit theater group that examined cultural themes through art. Realizing that she did not have the education and understanding of arts and culture to support her vision, she decided to enroll at Columbia University.

Lenius was first introduced to art from Africa at Columbia, specifically studying the ritual arts of Africa. She became fascinated by the subject.

"That was my first introduction to [African art] and it really set me on fire," Lenius said. "I was passionate about it because it brings together all the themes I was interested in with our theater company, in terms of having a multimedia approach to big cultural issues."

Lenius pursued her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Having received a fellowship to learn Swahili, Lenius' research focused on the adolescent initiation rites of the Shambaa community in Northeastern Tanzania. Her research combined her interest in performance and the body.

"One of the things that has emerged in my work is researching figurative imagery, how the body is presented artistically, both in terms of sculpture and the performing body," Lenius said. "Such as body adornments, ritualized dress, and how these objects are used in adolescent initiation rites to construct the bodies [and] artistically create bodies."

At Middlebury, Lenius is planning to teach classes that encompass her own research interests. These include courses on the issues of collecting African art objects in a museum context, contemporary African art and ancient Nubian art, to name a few. She also hopes to work in collaboration with the Black Studies Department and the Middlebury Museum of Art.

Additionally, Lenius will be teaching an introduction to African art class. This will complement the current introductory courses: Intro to Global Visual Culture and Monuments and Ideas/ Asian Art. Both are introductory survey courses covering most of Europe and Asia. Lenius said her introductory course on African art is constantly evolving — she previously taught the course as a graduate student.

"I wouldn't try to be comprehensive, but it would try to be representative, in the sense of giving really rich examples that would introduce students to the rich artistic traditions and the tremendous history of it so that, if you were to pursue this on your own, you would have a really good foundation," Lenius said.

Lenius said she is sensitive to her position as a white, female professor teaching about the arts of Africa. "There is a need for movement away from the history of these cultures by somebody who looks like me. There's a need for that, and I deeply respect that need," she said.

She also acknowledges that her research centers on East Africa, an underrepresented region within Africa. Traditionally, research in Africa focuses on West and Central Africa as a result of the histories of colonialism and the slave trade.

"It's my hope to honor their voices, making their voices the center of my research," Lenius said. "My goal is that I'm taking myself out of the equation and putting their voices at the fore."

Vazquez said the department is conscious of its exclusively white faculty. "It's definitely something that's at the front of our minds. In the end, we give the best person the job," said Vazquez. "There were a whole range of factors that went into deciding who we want to interview, how we conduct those interviews, and in consultation with students too about how they felt about the professor and what they offered."

In Vazqeuz's view, professors' identities matter inside and outside of the classroom, but professors' expertise also comes from their extensive work on a particular topic.

"Lots of people have gone to great lengths to learn different geographic and historic traditions with care," Vazquez said. "I don't think that physical presence in a particular tradition means that you know better than someone who has spent fifteen, twenty years studying it. There's something to be said about rigorous academic training."

It is also Vazquez's hope that the inclusion of African art as a department course offering will encourage more students to the subject of art history.

"I want people to be satisfied with their curiosities, and I want them to be engaged in those curiosities," Vazquez said. "I hope that there are more spaces for that curiosity than there used to be."

Courtesy photo

Marguerite Lenius is joining the Middlebury History of Art and Architecture Department.

COLLEGE IMPLEMENTS NEW PROGRAMS TO BALANCE ENROLLMENT NEXT YEAR

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one-time incentive for fall 2023 only and not offered in the future.

In addition to the travel reimbursement, Middlebury has announced plans for a new program starting for fall 2024 admits.

"We have created a pilot program allowing up to 32 first-year students who were admitted for the September term to spend their first semester abroad in Copenhagen," McCauley wrote.

This new program will also help reduce the disparity between the number of students on campus in the fall compared to the spring.

The increased number of students in the fall means Middlebury's housing capacity may be stretched thin. For the past two fall semesters, the college has used the Inn on the Green — located at 16 Court Square in Middlebury — for student housing. While there are no students housed at the Inn on the Green this spring, Associate Dean of Student Life AJ Place confirmed it would be used for student housing in fall 2023.

"We anticipate that housing will be full in the fall and Inn on the Green will be available to select in the Junior/ Senior process this spring. We also anticipate all students will move back to main campus for the spring term," read an email sent to rising juniors and seniors from the Residential Life office on March 27.

Students living at the Inn on the Green will receive a free parking pass, free laundry service through the student company Wash and Carry, assistance moving back to campus in the spring and priority in choosing spring housing.

"While we do not yet know the exact number of students in the incoming class or the number of students who plan to return after a pandemic-related leave, we are committed to providing the best possible academic and residential experience to our students and to minimizing any further disruption to their education," McCauley wrote.

DINING SERVICES TAKES MEASURES TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS FASTING FOR RAMADAN

By LIV SANCHEZ
Contributing Writer

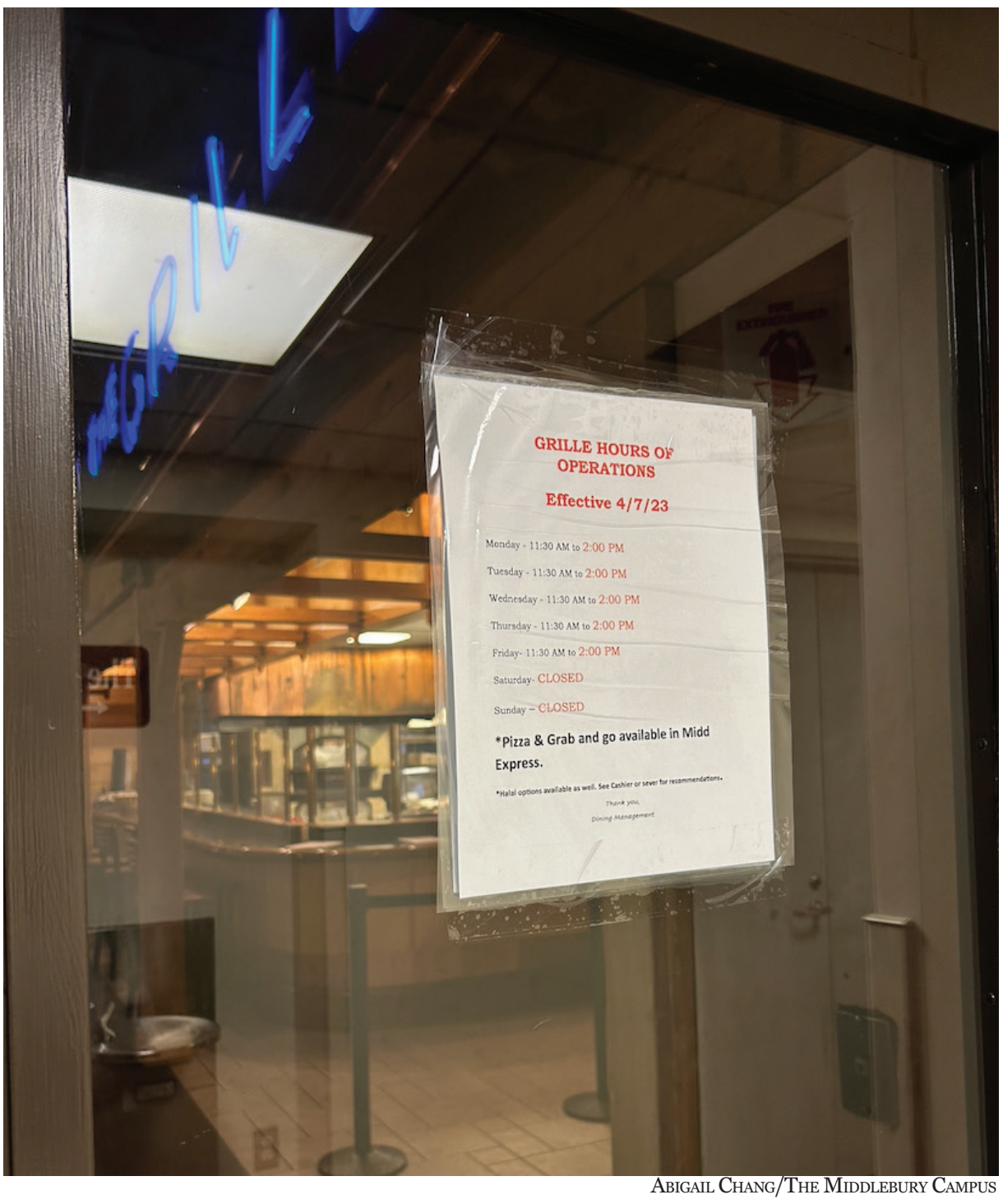
Muslim students fasting for the month of Ramadan from sunrise to sunset are left with limited hours where they can access dining hall meals at regular open times. In response, Middlebury Dining Services has taken measures to accommodate students who are fasting.

Dan Detora, speaking on behalf of the dining management team, said in an email to The Campus that Atwater and Ross Dining Halls, which close at 8:30 p.m., make meals with halal proteins that are available near the end of the dinner service for students to take as to-go meals. Proctor offers halal options but closes at 8:00 p.m. The team also noted that with sunset happening later every evening, this option does not always provide fasting students with sufficient time to grab their food.

According to the dining management team, dining services has worked with the Scott Center for Spiritual Life since at least 2006 to accommodate students observing Ramadan. However, a newer initiative has added food stocked in the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC) kitchen for fasting students.

"From conversations with Saifa Hussain, former Muslim Chaplain/Interfaith Advisor [at Middlebury], we created these protocols based [on] feedback from the Muslim students... [requiring] a single source for most of their food taken during Ramadan," Detora wrote. Ross dining hall leads this operation due to the dining hall's physical proximity to the AFC.

"All students have access to the AFC and free use of the kitchen at any point during the day," Detora said. Stocked snacks include packaged cereal, peanut butter, granola bars and hard-boiled eggs. The food items are collected by Ross dining staff and then transported to the AFC via student volunteers.


GRILLE HOURS OF OPERATIONS
Effective 4/7/23
Monday - 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Tuesday - 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Wednesday - 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Thursday - 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Friday- 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Saturday- CLOSED
Sunday – CLOSED
*Pizza & Grab and go available in Midd Express.
*Halal options available as well. See Cashier or sever for recommendations.
Thank you,
Dining Management

ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Grille hours have shortened due to understaffing.

This year, the Grille also provided free meals for observing students. However, for many students, this operation is not running as smoothly as hoped. There are currently five vacant late-night positions at the Grille according to Dining Services. "Because of that we are very limited in when and how we offer, not just Ramadan meals but something for all students. It makes what we can offer limited to certain days and times, unfortunately," Detora said.

In order to remedy this issue in part, the retail team at Middlebury is "working diligently to expand offerings in MiddExpress," Detora said. "Unfortunately, it all boils down to a man-power issue."

According to Ahmed Akoad '26, Muslim students who are a part of the MSA can receive a punch card which gives students free meals at the Grille. The card, however, can only be used Sunday through Wednesdays from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. But when asked for his opinion on the program, Akoad called it a "pretty sweet gesture."

Effective April 7, the Grille shifted their hours operations to closing at 2:00 p.m. during weekdays and closed completely during the weekends.

"As far as I know, they offer Halal options for those observing Ramadan nightly, and that's about all I know from the dining halls," Akoad said.

He hasn't been to the AFC kitchen, but called the food-stocking program "awesome." "I know many of the students that are a part of the MSA," Akoud said. "When the sun goes down they'll pray together, and then they'll go to the AFC and eat dinner together. So that kind of fosters a sense of community."

He said this sense of community extends to the prayer space. "If you're a member of the MSA, your ID card gives you access to the prayer room at any time, and you can stay there all night and just hang out. I think typically there are students in there, and they have food and a fridge in there. Some people stay up all night."

"I think the school is doing an okay job — I mean obviously, it could be a little better but it's not bad," Akoud said. "I think some people are pretty upset about the whole Grille situation and the fact that it's closing early when Muslims need to be eating later."

Taniya Noori '25 said that she has been to the Grille once. She appreciates the sentiment behind the initiative, but describes the foods as "not my favorite," and thus does not frequent the establishment. She did speak to the usefulness of the stocked AFC kitchen, however. "My friends often bring food from the AFC kitchen back to our dorms, and we sometimes do iftar [breaking of the fast] there," she said.

She also finds the halal dining hall offerings helpful.

"I usually try to eat halal chicken or beef, so I'm glad they gave us this option. If we're not in the AFC, we break fast in the Ross fireplace room, and it's great to have halal foods available for that," she said.

When asked for her opinion on how the school is faring in accommodating fasting students, she said, "I don't know what other people would say, but I say they've been doing a pretty good job. Even though the Grille is closed now because of staffing shortages, between the MSA, AFC and halal dining, there are some good options for Muslim students."

It's time to change the world: How the Effective Altruism Club is undertaking the challenge

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Contributing Writer

Every week, members of the Effective Altruism (EA) club meet to discuss the ways they can make meaningful changes with limited resources. The club was founded by Camiel Shroeder '25 in the fall of 2022 and is currently run by President Tim Hua '23.

"Effective altruism is when you want to do good and help the most people possible, and you think about how to go about doing that," Hua said.

Hua referenced the article Four Ideas You Already Agree With (That Mean You're Probably on Board with Effective Altruism) by Sam Deere during the club's past meeting when further explaining what the EA movement is. According to Deere, these four ideas are:

1. It's important to help others
2. People are equal
3. Helping more is better than helping less
4. Our resources are limited

Essentially, Deere illustrates that the EA movement helps the most people with such a limited amount of resources available. EA strategizes the most effective ways to uphold the four values that Deere describes.

"This way of thinking is applicable to any way that we might want to do good — whether that be agitating for political change, choosing where we donate our money, or how to have a big impact with our careers," Deere wrote in the article.

During the past meeting, members read and discussed the implementation of safety fundamentals when developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) software. Implementing safety fundamentals — such as researching ways that AI could potentially be harmful and strategizing policies that prevent these risks — is an effective way to ensure that AI systems aren't being used in harmful ways.

Tiffany Li '26 was introduced to EA in high school when they began listening to a podcast called 80,000 Hours — the estimated number of hours one works during their career. The podcast emphasizes the importance of long term actions to improve the state of the world and how this should be a moral priority.

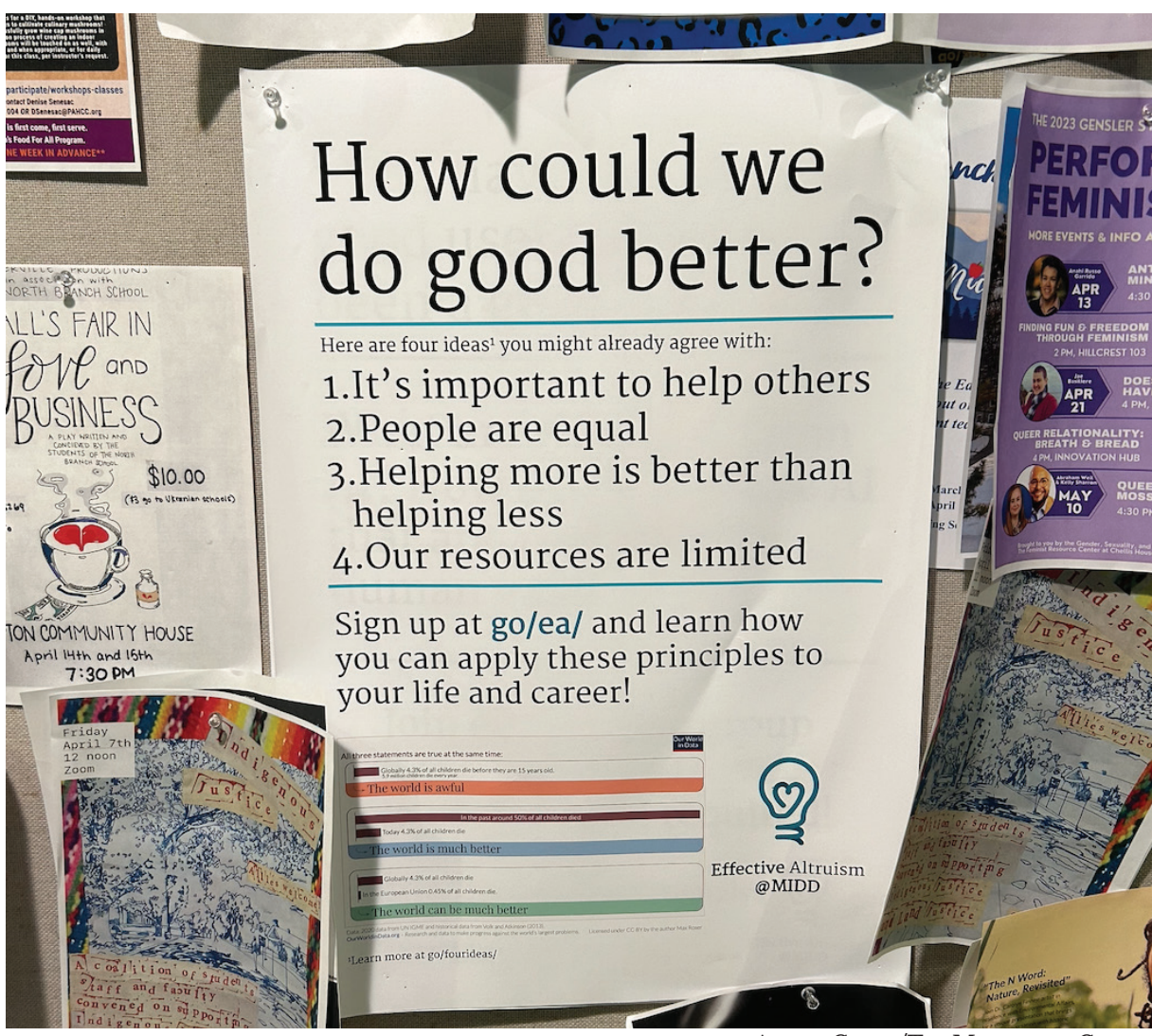
"I came to Middlebury and wanted to find an EA club, and there was one, so I joined," Li said.

Hua became an avid EA follower mainly after reading about the practice online. He attended several EA conferences where he was able to speak with fellow effective altruists and learn more about EA.

"Thinking about EA topics and talking to other people about these topics help me figure out what I want to do in life," Hua said.

> "Thinking about EA topics and talking to other people about these topics help me figure out what I want to do in life."

The club had a retreat last semester where they stayed in a hotel in Burlington, Vt. During the retreat, members held presentations about career planning. Hua has also attended conferences held by EA Global — an organization that holds events where members of the EA community collaborate to start initiatives that support the EA fundamentals — specifically ones centered around nuclear policy. Li and Hua applied to attend an EA Global conference in London during finals week.


How could we do good better?
Here are four ideas[1] you might already agree with:
1.It's important to help others
2.People are equal
3.Helping more is better than helping less
4.Our resources are limited
Sign up at go/ea/ and learn how you can apply these principles to your life and career!
Effective Altruism @MIDD
[1]Learn more at go/fourideas/
Friday April 7th 12 noon Zoom
$10.00
7:30 PM

ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
A sign advertising the EA club on the Proctor Dining Hall bulletin board.

"You want to help people, and helping more people is better than helping less people," Hua said. "Helping people who are far away is equally as important as helping people who are nearby and resources are limited so you have to act."

Professor Alison Stanger in the Political Science department teaches about EA in her senior seminar course: Who Elected Big Tech? Stanger believes it's difficult to quantify meaningful things in life, and therefore is not an effective altruist herself. However, Stanger does believe that effective altruists' perspective and reason-based approach are valuable in conversations centered around ethical thinking.

"Ethical altruists are perhaps unique on college campuses today for openly asking other students to prove them wrong," Stanger said. "We need more of that kind of moral debate on campus."

Members are dedicated to having difficult conversations and examining prevalent issues from a variety of perspectives that help the most people and effectively employ the limited resources. Hua encourages anyone interested in learning about EA or attending the club to contact him directly.

North Branch School annual student-written production explores love, deception and goats

By MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Senior Local Editor

The North Branch School in Ripton will put on its annual student-created theater production this Friday and Saturday, April 14 and 15, at the Ripton Community House. This year's show, titled "All's Fair In Love and Business," was written and will be performed by 26 students that all attend the school.

According to Tal Birdsey '87, head teacher at the North Branch School, the play is a celebration of the school and the community it fosters.

"The play serves to build camaraderie and togetherness after a long year of learning together," Birdsey told The Campus by email. "The winter is over, the sun is out, and we have a play to present to the world."

The students began working on developing the play in January, spending class time tossing around ideas, writing scenes and experimenting with themes, Birdsey wrote. "I suggest ideas, give them advice when they seem to be heading down a dead-end, encourage ideas that are possibly fruitful," he added.

From there, Birdsey and the students spent the next six weeks in the school basement rehearsing in a small space that they configured into a makeshift stage. "We add, subtract, re-write, start over, and try to refine it until 'play week,' when we spend most of the week in the Ripton Community House," Birdsey wrote.

Last year's show was about a group of sad orphans in a town called "Little Hope." It explored the process of finding renewed hope, Birdsey said, through the students' personal experiences with the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's "All's Fair in Love and Business" builds on the plot of last year's production, starting with characters who have left "Little Hope" for the town of "Centerville," where a large wedding is set to take place. Two conmen arrive in Centerville and try to set couples up arbitrarily so that they can make money from planning the weddings. Chaos soon ensues as the bride and groom's families turn on each other, the couples' relationships fall apart, the wedding is called off and wedding guests flee to a safe community called "Goatopia," for goats and the pure of heart.

"It is part comedy, part serious, an amalgam of SNL, Monty Python (with an adolescent spin), mixed with poetry and the attempt to define what true love is," Birdsey wrote to The Campus.

All 26 students at the school are involved with a variety of roles in the production, Birdsey added, including coming up with ideas, characters, plot lines, assembling props, costumes and stage managing. The production also includes music between each scene, which is performed by the students.

An independent school for kids in grades seven to nine, the North Branch School was co-founded by Birdsey and a group of local Ripton parents in 2001. Birdsey, a 1987 graduate of Middlebury College and 1993 graduate of the Bread Loaf School of English, said he and the other three teachers at the school all do more than one thing — he teaches literature, writing, history, art, theater, soccer and wiffleball, and he serves as the de facto school counselor.

According to the school's website, its mission is to create a small school environment that is focused on the needs of early adolescents.

"The founding philosophy is centered on a school concept that promotes self-directed and active learning, incorporates students' emotional, intellectual and growth issues, emphasizes experiential and outdoor education, and fosters a strong community based upon close student-teacher-parent relationships," the website reads.

Birdsey wrote that the school began doing the annual play in 2003, when the whole student body came to him with a signed petition that said, "We the undersigned students demand that we have a theatrical production. If Headmaster Tal Birdsey does not heed our demands, we will attack him with a pitchfork wielding mob."

Siblings, relatives, neighbors, alumni and other community members all typically come out for the North Branch School shows, according to Birdsey.

"It's a real celebration of the school," he added.

"All's Fair In Love and Business" will run this Friday and Saturday, April 14 and 15, at 7:30 p.m. at the Ripton Community House. Tickets may be purchased at the door for $10, and $3 from each ticket will be donated to a children's relief fund in Ukraine.

Courtesy of Tal Birdsey
A still from the North Branch School Production.

YELLOW HOUSE COMMUNITY SHORT FILM SCREENED AT TOWN HALL THEATER

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Local Editor

The Town Hall Theater hosted a public screening of a short film highlighting the Yellow House Community, a residential home for adults with disabilities, this past Thursday. With two evening showings, the event brought in over 200 people who came to show support for the film and learn more about Yellow House's program. Complete with a red carpet for the actors, a cocktail bar and a standing ovation, the event was meaningful for the residents, their families and the filmmakers alike.

Yellow House Community was founded in 2019 by Joe Brown '90, Kristen Brown '90, Andrea Murray and Chris Murray, two families planning the futures of their children with special needs. Located at 29 Seminary Street, its purpose is to provide adults with disabilities a structured and safe environment that allows them to live alongside others outside of their close family. It houses 3–4 residents — called "Friends" — at a time and staff to care for them.

Produced by Sundog Creation, the 10-minute short film features narrations by the founding couples, Representative Amy Sheldon D-Addison, Executive Director Elise Haydon, and Scott Bourne, program director at Middlebury Parks & Recreation. Its intention is to inform prospective residents, staff and donors to figure out if Yellow House Community is the right fit for them.

Through responses to a series of interview questions posed by the filmmakers, the founders expressed the inspiration behind Yellow House and its importance in their lives. They spoke about raising children with disabilities and their apprehension about the lack of social and interactive facilities for them as they age into adulthood.

The founders' mission with Yellow House is to cultivate a space that values interconnectedness and programming that celebrates the Friends' abilities. They recognize the value of socialization and genuine friendships in the Friend's lives, which other facilities for adults with disabilities often don't take into account.

The film also provides a glimpse into what everyday life in Yellow House is like. Introduced with the text "Boom & Woah!: The Making of a Community within a Community," the film includes a montage of clips of its staff and the house's Friends Jeb, Owen, Pierce, Hillary and Bip, interacting outside on the lawn, visiting Wiley Side Farm, cooking together in the house kitchen, visiting the Middlebury Co-op, and participating in activities in the community. According to the film, these activities create a healthy routine for the Friends and allow the broader community to become more comfortable interacting with people with disabilities.

Executive Director Elise Haydon '04 began meeting with Dana Ambrose, co-founder and owner of Sundog Creations, last spring to discuss the project and how they wanted to tell the story of Yellow House. Filming with the Friends lasted four days in addition to the long interview portion, followed by an intense editing process.

"We had hours of footage and interviews, and our process was distilling that down into bits and pieces that told the story," Ambrose told The Campus. He and his business partner, Jake Dombek, worked to create multiple versions of the film until it felt as natural and authentic as possible.

Co-founder Tom Brown found that speaking and answering the filmmaker's questions came naturally to him. "These are things you've thought about for a long time, and, when you're in the middle of it, it feels like a top-of-mind kind of thing," he said. "The other piece about it is that it's rather emotional — it's about building a family."

Brown and Haydon both anticipated an audience of about 100 at the Town Hall Theater screening and were extremely pleased with the 200-person turnout and the community's enthusiasm, which they said exceeded their expectations. The Friends were met with a standing ovation from a loud and joyful crowd when they entered the room, walked the red carpet and sat in special seats for viewing. People stuck around after the screenings finished to talk and ask questions.

"We decided to have the largest party for the smallest film, really almost as just a funny thing to bring some joy," Brown said. "We really just did this to celebrate the residents — once special needs kids leave high school, there's no more proms, there's very little pageantry that they'll have in their lives with those big events."

The Browns moved back to Middlebury from Ohio in 2019 where they met the Murrays and co-founded Yellow House, which has been staffed by a number of Middlebury alumni since, including Haydon.

"We really value our relationship with the college," Haydon noted, in reference to their student interns and Yellow House Community Club members. "It's a connection that will serve us in years to come. College students are young and our friends are young at heart."

The short film is posted online for viewing at https://yellowhousecommunity.com/.

The Giving Fridge enters its third year addressing food insecurity in Addison County

By SOPHIA GALUPPO & MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Contributing Writer & Senior Local Editor

As the creator of the Giving Fridge, Bethanie Farrell strives to alleviate food security in Vermont by increasing accessibility to nutritious,locally grown and prepared meals. The program provides the greater Addison County community with an average of 450 meals each week free of charge, thanks to funding mechanisms that include plants, grants and donations.

Located on Main Street in downtown Middlebury, the Giving Fridge is stocked with both food options from local restaurants to fresh produce. Meals can be catered towards individuals' needs in order to accommodate dietary needs and health conditions.

The community fridge emphasizes a rhetoric of connecting people through food. Farrell said the fridge has marked their success by seeing how "increased access to healthy meals improves the health, vitality, and productivity of our communities."

According to the Giving Fridge's website, it has been up and running for nearly three years and made substantial strides in improving the community's social and physical wellbeing. Its goal is to combat the stigma around food insecurity and the barriers this creates for individuals to gain access to healthy food.

Each week, the fridge is stocked with a different array of meals, rotating weekly restaurants, caterers, and food producers. This week's collaborators are American Flatbread, Crooked Ladle Catering, Magdalena's, Otter Creek Bakery, Otter East Bakery & Deli, as well as the Stevens Farmstead in Sudbury, Vt.

This week, Giving Fridge is moving locations to the Battell Block Storefront at 51 Main alongside Crooked Ladle Catering. In this new multi-use location, the Giving Fridge and Crooked Ladle hope to encourage overall community wellness through creativity and food. The new location will also hopefully aid accessibility as it is in the center of town and allow for local participation by pulling different interests together to unite under one roof.

In order to expand its reach, the Giving Fridge consistently works to incorporate new ideas and attractions into the organization's foundation. For example, they added Everything Nice, a boutique for plant and home decor located in the Giving Fridge location, whose proceeds go toward the meal program.

"Fostering resilient, sustainable, support systems within our communities is vital," Farrell told The Campus. Connected to the fridge's goals of community building, it has established a network of relationships with local restaurants and farms that in turn provides those businesses with an additional source of revenue.

The Giving Fridge's goals of ending food insecurity extend beyond Addison County to the greater state of Vermont. Through this expansion, the organization is a part of the Vermont Everyone Eats program, task force and hub of leaders that fights food insecurity in Vermont through advocacy connections, local initiatives, and statewide collaboration.

The fridge's initial goal was just to provide meals for a two-week period to relieve stress and food insecurity during the pandemic. However, thanks to a growing support system of local food providers, the Giving Fridge has been running for nearly three years, providing over 25,000 meals total in that time.

While the networks the fridge has fostered have benefitted it directly, the interconnectedness has also brought strength to the Vermont area, Farrell said. "Giving Fridge has set out to strengthen our local food system and nurture our community ecosystem," Farrell said. She added that the fridge has been founded on members of the Middlebury community's willingness to lend a hand and the subcommunities formed during the process.

One way Middlebury students can support the community fridge's mission is by buying a plant from Everything Nice — every $10 spent at Everything Nice pays for a meal at the Giving Fridge. For those looking for more hands-on involvement, individuals can join volunteer groups to aid meal delivery and distribution as well as create fundraising opportunities to directly finance meal building.

Courtesy of Bethany Farrell
The new location of Everything Nice, the Giving Fridge at 51 Main Street.

A CALL TO PROCTOR EXAMS

Notes from the Desk

Hannah Sayre *is a member of the class of 2024 and an opinions editor for The Campus.*

In one of my in-person midterm exams this term, I observed cheating on an egregious level. With phones in their laps, four students copied down answers from their screens. They showed their exams to one another and copied down answers from each other's papers. They whispered loudly to one another, discussing questions and answers as if there were no one else in the room. This went on for the entirety of the two-hour exam. Another student, sitting by themselves in a different part of the room, used their phone, which sat covertly in the top pocket of their backpack.

The fact that this group of students felt comfortable being so conspicuous with their cheating underscores the tenacity of the culture of cheating at Middlebury; they knew that their peers would be able to notice their cheating, but they still did not expect to get told on or punished. While this episode of cheating was unusually blatant, it is not the first I have seen, and I don't expect it to be the last. In various midterms and finals, many of which were for classes in economics, my major, I've seen students use their phones under the table or take their phones to the bathroom. Economics is currently the only department that proctors exams; an exception to the Honor Code was made in response to persistent and rampant incidents of cheating. In the middle of one exam, my professor announced to the class: "I can see when you go on Canvas in the bathroom in the middle of the exam." Usually, though, professors are oblivious.

I'm not interested in snitching on any cheating students. In fact, I believe that the cheaters themselves are only partly to blame. It shouldn't be surprising that cheating is common at a college with such lax policies surrounding academic dishonesty. The Honor Code, written and implemented as is, does not actively prevent cheating nor does it create an environment where action against cheaters tends to occur. Instead, the Honor Code relies on the assumption that the student body "values academic integrity as a way of life." Under the Honor Code, faculty are also required to "support an intellectual environment of trust and respect for students by giving unproctored exams."

Unfortunately, the "intellectual environment of trust and respect" is an unattainable utopia. Administrators overestimate students' commitment to this mission. Cheaters will exist at every academic institution, no matter how elite or justice-oriented. As a college that aims to provide a lifetime of opportunity for every student, Middlebury's role should be to disincentivize cheating and to create an environment where students feel comfortable reporting it when it occurs. This would level the playing field among students. Middlebury students are smart enough to know that cheating can distort formal and informal curves, as well as professors' views on the student body as a whole. A culture of cheating can incentivize honest students to cheat, as well, so as to compete academically — if some kids are getting a higher grade from cheating, shouldn't I cheat as well?

Abigail Chang / The Middlebury Campus

An empty classroom in Munroe Hall.

Reporting cheating is not so simple. The Honor Code states: "Any member of the College community (student, faculty or administrator) who is aware of a case of academic dishonesty is morally obligated to report it to the professor or the Office for Community Standards." However, no one wants to be known as a snitch, and there's no such thing as anonymity when reporting leads to an investigation. Moreover, proctors in the economics department are students who are socially intertwined with the exam-takers in the room, so they may feel social pressure to keep quiet about cheating in order to protect their reputations. Replacing student proctors with professors and proctoring exams in every department is the most effective way to disincentivize cheating on in-person exams.

There are always going to be some students who disobey the Honor Code, especially in environments where it is harder to enforce. AI chatbots like ChatGPT are making it easier than ever to turn in work that is not one's own. There are few ways to prevent students from obtaining past exams from their friends. There are few ways to ensure that students won't look at their notes during take-home exams. These are different challenges with less obvious solutions, but professor-proctored exams in every department are an easy way to make it harder for students to cheat on in-person exams. By leaving exams unproctored, Middlebury is fostering an environment where cheating is permissible — even implicitly encouraged — and honest students lose out.

It Happens Here 2023

Op-Ed

Andrea Lopez *is a member of the class of 2025 and the co-organizer of It Happens Here 2023.*

At It Happens Here, an annual tradition at Middlebury since 2011, members of the student body gather to hear the stories of sexual violence from their peers. This tradition began with Margo Cramer '12 and Luke Carroll Brown '13.5 as a way to give power to the voices of survivors. Elevating and recognizing narratives of sexual violence is important because these experiences have often remained unvoiced. We hope that in sharing stories as a collective, we foster a safe space for people to process their trauma.

Middlebury students all come from different towns, cities, countries, economic backgrounds, ethnicities and races. Yet our backgrounds are not exclusive to survivors' healing at IHH and understanding the stories of others. Storytelling presents a collective healing space to connect survivors in our journeys at Middlebury.

So why should you go to It Happens Here 2023?

Too often sexual assault is underreported or not reported at all. No sentences are given, no lasting solutions established, and the cycle of violence in our society continues. Shame often prevents victims of all genders and sexual orientations from reporting their sexual assault. In the event that a sentence is handed down,"justice" is served without aims to prevent future sexual violence. The memory of what occurred lasts forever. Survivors are left to deal with the trauma of what somebody else did to them for the rest of their lives. It Happens Here provides a space to share these stories with an audience. Having witnesses present for this demonstration empowers survivors and the validity of their story. Whether survivors would like to remain anonymous or read their own story, IHH allows them to express themselves in a space free of judgment.

In addition to the storytelling event, we aim to create a broader conversation about rape culture at Middlebury. The 2021–2022 student-body Zeitgeist survey collected data surrounding sexual assault; 105 students reported to have been sexually assaulted on campus. We hope that survivors' stories will demonstrate how these situations are not black and white and that there are many complexities that surround them.

While one may think that they are not contributing to the issue directly, it's possible to contribute to a culture that overlooks consent. Pretending not to see questionable behavior from friends, making light of harassment, engaging in objectifying "locker room talk" or pressuring your friends to "make a move" are all ways it's possible to contribute indirectly. While you may not be the one physically assaulting someone, you could have contributed to the mindset of rape culture that justifies sexual assault. The mandatory online training required for first years has likely escaped upperclassmen's memories long ago. However, the conversation surrounding behavior, violent language and consent can always be refreshed.

For survivors, we provide outlets other than storytelling to express your experience with sexual violence. Along with a written story (go/ihh2023/), we invite you to submit artwork, poems, photography and more to go/ihhart/. If you feel comfortable, we welcome you to attend IHH 2023 on April 26 at 6 p.m. at Wilson Hall.

Though we want to continue pursuing a world in which this violence does not occur, it is critical to engage in these conversations because sexual assault does happen at Middlebury, as much as we want to believe it doesn't exist on our campus. It Happens Here.

Creating community through on-campus drag

Op-Ed

Alex DeFeo *is a member of the class of 2025.*

I'll never forget my 17-year old self, just two months away from starting my academic career at Middlebury College, wearing a SoHo beauty supply store pair of lashes and trying to strut my way into one of Brooklyn's top drag competitions. I held my close friend's hand while simultaneously trying to break in a new pair of high heels and glue on my last few press-on nails, all while making my best effort not to trip on the bumpy concrete street. Little did I know, I was about to discover the importance of fostering a community within the drag scene and apply this to Middlebury College's campus.

As we entered the Cuban club, we were greeted by Staci, one of my close drag artist friends who was hoping to take the crown home that night. My friend and I took our seats, ordered guacamole, chips and sodas before taking out our single dollar bills in preparation for the show to begin. The lights dimmed and the competition host, Janelle No. 5, walked towards center stage, causing the entire room to begin screaming in excitement.

Throughout the night, I noticed how Janelle had the capability to bring a group of strangers together and foster a community over the course of just four hours. She engaged with the audience, shared positive affirmations and got the entire room to start dancing, laughing and jumping on their feet with her performances. I then realized how drag had the capability of creating a tight knit community. For those three hours, nothing else mattered and we all felt safe with one another. I kept thinking, "I want to be like her." I instantly wanted to be a part of this drag community. I met drag artists that were just starting up in the NYC drag scene and were 18 and 19 years old. Prior to meeting them, I had never met people my age who were so comfortable in their own skin as queer individuals. I saw how community in the drag scene can not only boost confidence levels, but can also allow you to explore your own creative and gender expression.

With this newfound inspiration to be a part of the drag community, I went to Ulta with my friends and bought new products with the hope of practicing my makeup more. Over months, I kept practicing makeup in my dorm room. February 2022 was a milestone in my drag career as I traveled to Sarasota, Florida with one of my friends. In a warmer climate, I was able to experiment with more feminine clothing for my drag. I hand selected outfits, like colorful crop tops, swimsuits and latex pants, that I would wear in photoshoots. While in Florida, I got into drag multiple times and conducted photoshoots in museums, community pools and even at a shooting range.

I took this risk because I believe that drag is a walking and living representation of creative expression and joy. If one person could smile or see themselves in me, as I did when I saw the hyperfem (hyper feminine) queens in Brooklyn, then I consider the risk to be worth it. To me, drag also helps contribute to community building because visibility and representation can help others see themselves in certain spaces and feel inclined to learn more or join these groups. I was given tons of love on social media when I posted my drag photoshoots from Florida. Many Middlebury students were messaging me saying that I inspired them and wished that they had the courage to start drag. I realized how Middlebury desperately needed a community that embraced and gave people the tools to start drag. After this, I wondered how I could create a larger drag community on campus, like the one I had experienced in Brooklyn. I remembered how welcomed I felt by the NYC drag community before I was even interested in starting drag. It soon became my personal mission to create a Middlebury drag community that would continue to exist for years to come.

As the 2023 spring Middlebury drag show was approaching, I realized that the other two student performers would be graduating and I would be the only student drag artist left. The Middlebury drag community has always been small and I wanted to expand it and give opportunities for inquiring people to dip their toes into this art form. I understand first-hand how nerve-racking it can be to stand in front of a large audience — especially in drag — come up with a number, practice makeup, learn how to walk in heels, and memorize choreography without any previous experience. So, I created the first ever Beginner Drag Workshop on campus, with the help of Middlebury Queers and Allies and Vlad the Impaler, my incredible co-host. The workshop spanned two days, the first involving a quick history of drag, basic makeup skills, and brainstorming a drag name and persona. The second workshop day consisted of learning performance skills and drag etiquette. The workshop was a beautiful experience. We were able to create a community of people eager to learn the art form of drag. After all, drag is a community that is meant to be shared with people. I am so happy to say that as of now, three of my workshop participants will be making their drag debuts at the Middlebury spring drag show. These drag artists are juniors, sophomores and first years, so Middlebury will continue to have its own drag presence after our seniors graduate. After the workshop, I came to the conclusion that having a community of drag artists and allies on campus is not only crucial, but needed.

Courtesy of Alex DeFeo

DeFeo pointing at the announcement of "Beginner Drag Workshop."

I am committed to continuing to bring drag to the Middlebury campus and use it as a way to create community not only with drag artists, but with other students and faculty who wish to learn and support drag. Having a flourishing drag community on campus is absolutely needed in order to provide a safe space for those interested in expanding their knowledge on drag or don't know where to get started. Having a growing community presence also creates more visibility on campus to show that we are here as drag artists and will continue to make names for ourselves as artists on campus. I hope to continue my workshop next year and introduce drag brunches, open stages, and bring guest speakers who participate in the art of drag to campus. My goal is that these events will continue to grow the on-campus drag community and inspire others to feel confident in their own skin and experiment with clothing, makeup and accessories.

This summer, you can catch me in NYC, where I was born and raised, making even more photoshoots and performing at any drag show that isn't 21+ — I still have a year left before the big 21st birthday! If you're interested in starting drag, be on the lookout for next year's beginner drag workshop or message me on Instagram: @alexandriaavenue to get started.

ON MIDDLEBURY'S INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION DURING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER THREAT

Editorial

This editorial represents the opinion of The Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Susanna Schatz

At 10:28 p.m. on Sunday night, the college received a call reporting an ongoing shooting and mass casualty incident in the Davis Family Library. After an investigation that included a search and evacuation of the building, law enforcement concluded that the call was a hoax — one of an increasing number of swatting calls targeting academic institutions. But for an hour and a half — while many students hid in dark rooms and behind barricaded doors, while others were confronted by armed police and escorted to guarded safe zones — the threat appeared incredibly real. By failing to quickly inform the campus community about the event, the college left students to bear the burden of responding on their own during the crucial hours of the situation.

> The college did not send out a MiddAlert emergency notification for almost an hour and a half after they received the false report.

The college did not send out a MiddAlert emergency notification for almost an hour and a half after they received the false report. Middlebury received the call at 10:28 p.m., law enforcement responded at 10:30 p.m. and the college sent a MiddAlert message informing students that there was "a report of an active shooter at the Davis Famiy [sic] Library on campus" and the threat was likely not credible at 11:54 p.m. This message came after nearly all students in the library had been located, interviewed and evacuated by law enforcement.

Prior to the dissemination of this message, students inside and outside of the building had received no official communication about what was going on in the library — including whether or not the threat was credible. Instead of getting clear, authenticated and up-to-date information from the college, our community had to rely on dubious information shared through text group chats and social media. Rumors spread alongside accurate information. An anonymous Facebook post claimed that a police scanner had reported an individual in a suicide vest in the library. A community member posted on YikYak claiming that they had heard gunshots.

Parents compared anecdotes on Facebook and attempted to assess the safety of their children. Students anxiously watched the flashing lights of cop cars on the MiddCams library livestream. Unsure who to trust, a group of students barricaded themselves in Dana Auditorium and refused to come out until the officer sent to escort them home could provide proof of identity.

And still, everyone wondered where the emergency alert from the college was. Why was there no information about what was happening, who was on the scene and what students were supposed to do?

In conversations with The Campus, administrators said that they initially held off on sending alerts because they were concerned that — given that law enforcement had informed them the call was likely not credible — sending an alert might result in avoidable panic.

"Initial consideration was given to whether use of RAVE [MiddAlert] would cause unnecessary panic given that there was no actual evidence of an active shooter in the library or anywhere else on our campus," Sue Ritter, chief risk officer, wrote in a Wednesday statement to The Campus.

And yet, the lack of immediate communication about the potential threat, the presence of armed law enforcement officers and the impression of credibility resulted in an environment of fear and panic that put the onus on students inside the unfolding situation to spread the word. In this attempt to curb unnecessary panic, the college's belated update ultimately created more chaos and uncertainty, which was exacerbated by untrue and conflicting information.

Students in the library felt a responsibility to inform their peers, with some telling friends and housemates to get inside and lock their doors. But these were the people who should have been least involved in alerting campus — in an actual active shooter scenario, students picking up phone calls and revealing the secure locations where they were being hidden via social media could have posed a serious threat to their safety.

But there was seemingly no one else who stepped up to inform campus about what students in the building then believed to be a genuine active shooter threat. And, given that Middlebury does not hold active shooter or lockdown drills, many inside and outside of the building were unfamiliar with the proper protocol for such a scenario.

Students were left to decide how best to respond based on previous, sometimes limited, knowledge about proper responses to potential gun violence. A range of reactions ensued — although some turned off their lights, closed blinds and identified escape routes, others were confused and simply waited to hear from the college without stopping their work or were even on their way to the library, unaware of the threat, as law enforcement conducted their search.

Inside the library, many students realized what was going on when they were met with officers in tactical gear who pointed guns at them and told them to put their hands up so they could be escorted to a safe location. Seemingly, the college failed to realize how, beyond the fact that many students still believed there was a genuine threat of a shooter in the building at that point, the experience of rounding a corner and having a rifle pointed at them would almost certainly be frightening and traumatizing. Had students received a message that law enforcement were responding to a potential — yet likely fabricated — threat, they might have sought out safety rather than being confronted with a rifle on their way to the bathroom.

Of course, the decision to send out alerts should be carefully assessed by the emergency response team. But given how this situation went down, we have to ask, what are the circumstances under which the MiddAlert system will be used if not in the case of a potential active shooter? Students are owed greater transparency about the criteria and process for sending such alerts — both so they can understand what went wrong on Sunday and so they can have a better idea of what to expect in future emergency situations. Three days later, this information has still not been communicated with students.

> Had students received a message that law enforcement were responding to a potential — yet likely fabricated — threat, they might have sought out safety rather than being confronted with a rifle on their way to the bathroom.

The administration said that there was not enough substantiated evidence that warranted triggering the emergency notification system. But this did not stop other institutions who also experienced swatting calls on the same night from sending an immediate message or warning. At Boston University, the first alert was sent out simultaneously with the arrival of law enforcement and read, "two calls for an active shooter have been received by BU Police [...] Nothing has been discovered at this time, but there is a heavy police presence in these areas. An update will be sent out when we have more information."

An active shooter situation requires an immediately communicated response. An alert could rapidly notify students to take action immediately, potentially offering them more time to assess their best strategy. We have a centralized system in place to provide students with clear and accessible information — yet, in the hours lacking official alerts, rumors heightened fear and paranoia.

The college finally communicated with students after most had received unofficial information from students in the building that the situation had been resolved. The school asked everyone to "shelter in place until further notice." The contradictory information only elevated the level of confusion that was a direct result of the school's failure to communicate quickly.

In addition to the college's failure to communicate effectively and timely, Middlebury also failed to prepare campus community members for a potential emergency of this severity.

There has never been an active shooting or lockdown drill at any point during the past four years. The unfortunate reality is that Middlebury cannot assume it will be spared from gun violence: American college campuses have experienced deadly shootings in recent years. In recent months, schools and colleges have also received an uptick in false reports of active shooters or bomb threats. That same Sunday, alongside Middlebury, Wake Forest University and Boston University received hoax reports.

When the college did eventually send out a belated MiddAlert message asking students to "run, hide, fight," they did not account for how these words might be unfamiliar to international students or students who have never undergone gun violence training or drills. At the very least, the college should provide training for relevant student workers and residential assistants on how to proceed during an active shooter threat.

If the goal in delaying the emergency alert was to prevent panic, this was an utter failure. If the goal was to avoid spreading fear about unsubstantiated and likely not credible threats, this was an utter failure. From our communication with administrators, we know alerts were not held to keep students' ringers from going off and revealing their locations in the library — which many students assumed was the explanation for the delay. The college was aware early on that the threat was likely not credible: The call came from off campus and the description provided by the caller was inconsistent with what law enforcement saw when they entered the building, Ritter's statement said. But rather than sharing this information immediately — especially the crucial fact that the threat was likely fabricated — the college allowed the campus to speculate and spiral for an hour and a half.

The administration also shared with The Campus that part of the reason for the timing of the alert was that they did not have a pre-populated message in the MiddAlert system specifically for a low-credibility threat with a high law enforcement presence. "Once we decided to activate RAVE [MiddAlert] we needed to create a new message template that accurately and succinctly addressed the situation. This contributed to the delay," Ritter wrote. It took the college an hour and a half to draft a five-sentence email, three-sentence text and brief automated call. And yet, one Editorial Board member said she and a friend inside the library called every Middlebury student in their contacts before the college's shelter-in-place message even went out.

> From our communication with administrators, we know alerts were not held to keep students' ringers from going off and revealing their locations in the library — which many students assumed was the explanation for the delay.

We know the college Crisis Management Team is reviewing protocol and developing "new alert protocols for situations that involve a low credibility threat with a substantial police presence on campus." We urge them to consider student experiences in this situation as they make decisions about how to keep our community safe in the future.

Our trust in the college's ability to keep us safe and make the right calls in an emergency has been severely eroded by the response to Sunday's situation. It is imperative that the college works to rebuild a sense of security and trust on this campus — and that starts with immediate transparency and clear communication, both about Sunday's event and for all emergency situations that may emerge in the future.

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

The Campus accepts submissions of opinions, reflections and letters to the editor from all members of our community, every week. Pieces from students, staff and faculty are all welcomed for consideration.

Email **llaesch@middlebury.edu** with submissions.

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The Middlebury Campus

Super senior Febs: Losing seniority in the final semester

Notes From the Desk

Libby Scaperotta *is an opinions editor and a member of the class of 2024.*

Abigail Chang / The Middlebury Campus

Townhouses are chosen through a separate lottery for juniors and seniors.

The recent townhouse lottery has left many super senior Febs disappointed. Unlucky lottery times and the lack of priority draw for older students are a set-up for disaster.

The current housing lottery groups rising super senior Febs with the incredibly large rising senior and senior Feb classes. This current system completely disregards previous understandings of seniority and puts Super Seniors at a disadvantage when it comes to getting a housing option with a common space. Rather, they must compete for spaces with the younger Senior class during their very last semester.

This is difficult to accept for many Super Seniors, who wish that the seniority principle that applies to other systems at Middlebury applied to housing, as well. Super Senior Febs enroll in classes at earlier times than Seniors due to their credits; they graduate earlier; and they have simply spent more time at this college. A lack of recognition of this in the housing draw leaves Super Seniors nervous about what options might be available in the on-campus housing lottery.

Due to these concerns, many super seniors turn to off-campus housing options. Going off-campus typically guarantees that one may live with their chosen roommates in an apartment or house with a common space. However, in reality, off-campus housing is hard to come by. Many off-campus housing options are informally or formally claimed years or months in advance, and others are passed down through networks of friends. Entering this web of connections takes months, or even years, of planning and networking.

Even when off-campus housing is a viable option, it is not always desireabled. Off-campus living is not for everyone — it might feel isolating or require transportation to reach campus. Often, students express that they would rather live in a suite on campus, but are wary of their chances. They would rather cut their losses with the on-campus lottery and pay the prices of living off-campus.

Yet, even when off-campus housing is utilized, that comes with a whole slew of other related issues. The current student-landlord relationship is short-lived and often tenuous; the semester-by-semester renting does not provide opportunities for fostering closebeneficial relationships between students and townspeople. This is further compounded by, most often, super seniors being a large portion of the student tenants and only living off-campus for one semester. This does truly nothing to amend the shaky relations between students and townspeople, an issue with its own history.

If the on-campus lottery were adjusted to give super seniors a priority draw, this class wouldn't feel as often like they "needed" off-campus housing for its common space and roommate guarantees their last semester. Then, off-campus housing could become an open option for more upperclassmenupper classmen to consider. With this shift, we could see longer leases in off-campus houses or apartments, thus allowing beneficial student-landlord relationships to grow. This could help ease tensions that were raised following the noise-ordinance implementation and complaints of off-campus student behavior from community members.

The scramble for housing and the stresses associated with the lottery are almost inevitable with the current state of over-enrollment. However, the fact that these stresses are borne by oldest students at the school feels especially upsetting as they head into their last semester. Concerns of living in a row of singles or doubles along a dormitory hall feels like it could dictate theirone's whole social life during their last semester. Various options of shared suite living or dormitory style rooms should be abundant for the most senior of students, not hard to come by.

The frustrating reality of winter in New England

Op-Ed

Lucas Tomas *is a member of the class of 2023.5.*

Courtesy of Lucas Tomas

The Snow Bowl preparing lanes for the season.

During our years at Middlebury, many of us have grown accustomed to Vermont's famously harsh winter conditions. Whether you're a hardened New England native or a sun-tanned California beach-goer, we've all learned to cope with howling wind, sub-zero temps and every variety of frozen precipitation imaginable. This year, however, was a different story: temperatures soared into the 50s throughout December and January, a welcome change for many students and longtime Vermonters alike.

However, not everybody was thrilled about the milder temps. Ski resorts across Vermont battled the warmest January on record, as warm, sunny weather and frequent rain storms decimated their existing snow base. "This year was undeniably a slow start," said Mike Hussey, who is currently serving his fifth season as Director of the Middlebury Snowbowl. Thanks to its robust snowmaking infrastructure, the Snowbowl was able to run lifts throughout an unpredictable early season, but struggled to maintain favorable conditions throughout the winter months.

In a stark contrast to the early-season snow drought, March tipped the snowfall scales back to average. After three consecutive storms brought record-breaking levels of heavy snow, Vermont is back to within inches of its historical mean annual snowfall levels. On March 13, a nor'easter dropped over three feet of snow in some Vermont towns, according to the VTDigger, much to the relief of mountain workers, avid skiers and winter fanatics alike.

These erratic winter conditions are nothing unusual. Growing up in New Hampshire, the unpredictability of winter was something I became familiar with; the inevitable seesaw between "seasonable" and "unseasonable" was all but guaranteed. With astounding frequency, casual conversations center around the weather — from gas stations to grocery stores, a chorus of climate-related remarks (e.g., "How 'bout this weather?") reverberate across the state for most of the year. At the very least, the fickle conditions give us New Englanders plenty to talk about.

As a lifelong winter enthusiast, I have my fair share of memories stemming from unseasonable weather: in October 2012, I vividly remember waking up on Halloween to find a foot of snow blanketing the landscape beyond my bedroom window. Later that night, my 7th grade companions and I spent all night traipsing through the snowbanks, building snow forts and partaking in endless rounds of block-wide snowball fights. At school the next day, the teacher inquired as to why so many of us sported bandages across our noses and cheeks. "Battle scars," we explained, reveling in the previous night's events like Achaean warriors.

Years later, while deep into a mid-winter drought, my high school Nordic team reconciled with the opposite end of winter's volatility. Facing a critical lack of snowfall, we incorporated several new exercises into our training regimen: hopping over dirt patches, dodging corn stalks peeking through the snow or even running miles in plastic-soled Nordic boots, skis in hand, seeking terrain with appropriate snow cover.

Our coach, looking to make the most of these unseasonable conditions, would dedicate one day a week to "adventure runs," a term he coined for muddy, wet cross-country adventures traveling through the woods adjacent to our training grounds. These outings included several river crossings, during which a good chunk of our team (myself included) was swept hundreds of feet down shore by the raging current. I can't say the school was particularly fond of our training style, but man was it fun.

This winter at the Snowbowl has been unpredictable, to say the least. But that's all part of the fun in East Coast winter recreation; rain or shine, skiers continue to flock to mountain destinations, despite subpar conditions. If anything, the lack of early season snowfall has made these surprisingly auspicious March conditions all the more exciting.

So what will next year bring? Personally, I'm casting my vote for another unusually warm season with little to no snowfall, and preferably a handful of rainy days thrown in the mix. While my inner ski bum cringes at this utterance, I'd be foolish not to give Mother Nature a chance at proving me wrong. Your move, ma'am.

DANCING SOMEWHERE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

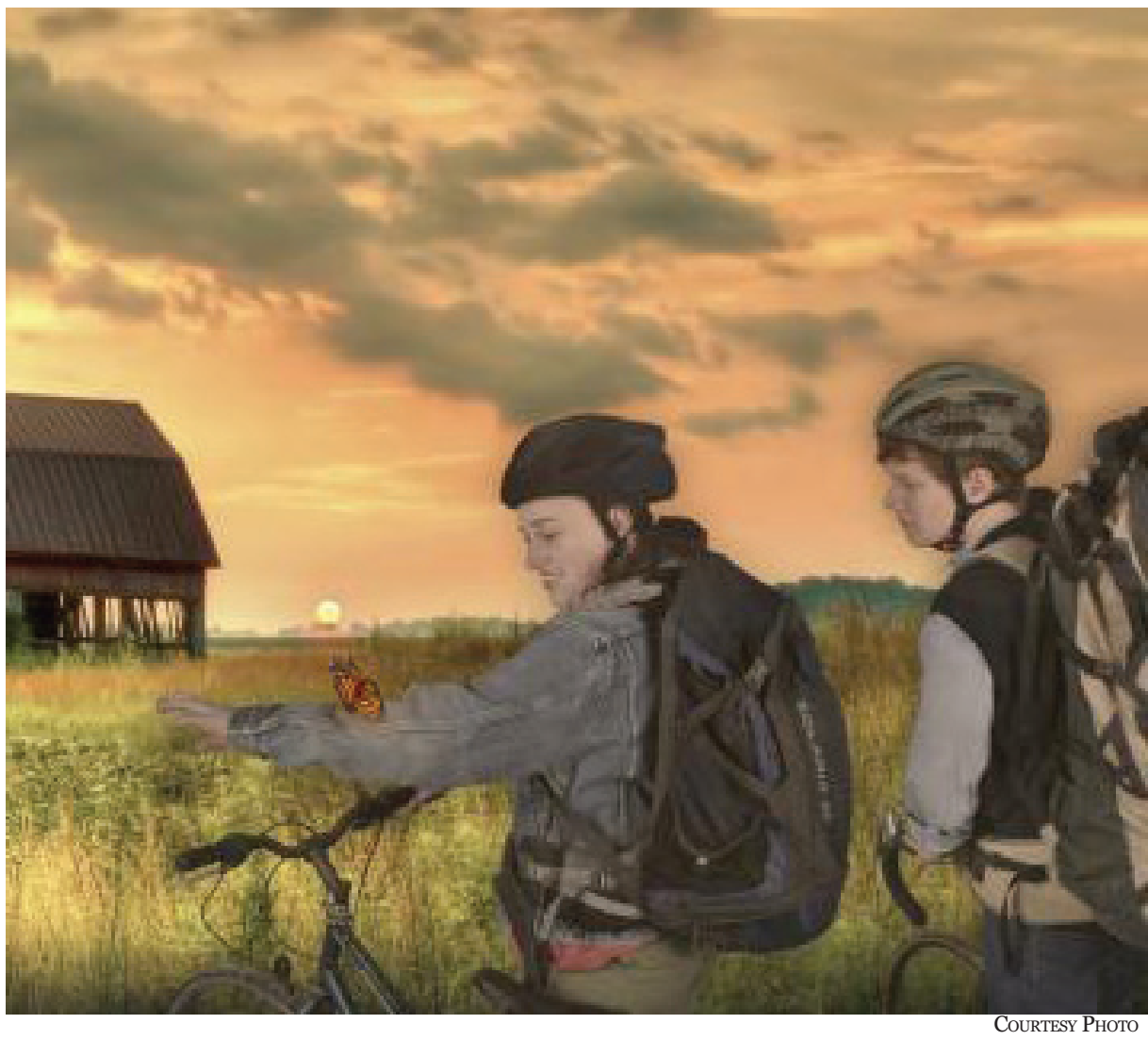
By JOSHUA GLUCKSMAN
Staff Writer

Would you dance through the night in the apocalypse? What would it be like to eat your last tomato? Why would you bring kids into a world without adequate food and water? Could the end of days bring out the worst in you? These are just some of the questions posed by Marisela Treviño Orta's "Somewhere," directed by Assistant Professor of Theatre Olga Sanchez Saltveit, which premiered April 6 in the MAC. The play was part of a larger series of events spanning two separate weeks entitled "Art vs. the Apocalypse," in which the Franklin Environmental Center invited a variety of artists, professors and students to share with the community what role the arts have in raising awareness about climate change.

The first event in this series, a talk by Professor of Theatre, Environment and Indigenous Studies at the University of Oregon Theresa May entitled "Climate Theatre: Stories of Kinship, Community and Climate Justice," served as a framing conversation that was offered several hours before the debut of "Somewhere." May pointed to the history of socially-conscious theater to argue that the arts have always accompanied social transformation. She explained that eco-drama specifically is a place for connections and intimacy because stories invite audiences to immerse themselves in distinct imaginations of what various futures could look like, depending on the climate action that we take today.

Reflecting the sentiments of May's lecture,"Somewhere" is set in a future that is not necessarily ours, but one wherein "things went very wrong, very fast." The audience instantly grasps this reality, as the play starts in a laboratory where it is revealed that the last monarch butterflies in the world are being tracked and studied. Yet, a unique theme that was present throughout the play began to emerge: seemingly serious and tragic lines were followed often by absurd and outlandish comments. For example, a central character Diana (Xiaole Niu '25) explains how she hates truffles because "it's a texture thing," while her older sister, Sybil (Meili Huang '23), retorts, "I hate starving. It's a hunger thing."

Scenes like these with such a rollercoaster of emotions reflect that humor is an all-too-human mechanism to make sense of a chaotic world, and the audience reflected this by responding with laughter. At the Friday night post-show discussion, Sanchez Saltveit, who reflected alongside May and Orta, explained how shocking the audience's reaction was. "To take a line that in rehearsal was so serious, yet everyone in the audience was laughing kind of makes sense," she said. The main focus of the post-play discussion was on the role of symbolism and myth, which were indeed large focuses for playwright Orta, as her interests, starting from childhood, are rooted in mythology. For example, a scene in the play depicted an intense argument between siblings about the way that the same event in mythology can often have multiple meanings. Alexander (Ethan Fleming '24) tries to explain how he thinks humanity is cursed because increasingly there are sightings of humans decomposing with plant life growing out of them. He relays that in the story of Narcissus and Daphne, both are turned into plants, a flower and tree respectively, because they are cursed by the gods. His sister Cassandra (Kayla Schwartz '23.5) counters that for Daphne, being turned into a laurel tree was not a curse, but a way to save her from Apollo's unwanted advances.



Courtesy Photo

This conversation does not become important until near the end of the play, when another piece of literature is introduced: Diana's favorite book "The Enchanted April," by Elizabeth von Arnim. Its plot follows a similar theme, wherein a tree grows magically, but this time as a sign of joy. All of the mythological themes around death being reborn into nature come together at the end of the play when Corin (Ryan Ulen '26) must reconcile with what death really means in the context of a world where beautiful flowers grow out of dying bodies. In her discussion of the play's themes, May emphasized how symbols of rebirth are not mere metaphors, but are in fact real in the natural world.

Orta elaborated on May's point at the reception after the play. Her intention for weaving old myths about rebirth into new concepts was in line with humanity's complex understanding of life and death. "We are part of a life cycle where we can think about death as life. There is life coming out of a dying person, and we don't have to privilege or emphasize one over the other," Orta said.

To find out more about the upcoming events part of the series Art vs. the Apocalypse, which will be continuing the weekend of April 20, 21 and 22, visit go/artvapoc/.

Theo Bleckmann and the Westerlies deliver the music of modern protest

By BRETT SORBO
Contributing Writer

Courtesy Photo

Theo Bleckmann and The Westerlies.

Last week, Theo Bleckmann and The Westerlies were in residence in the Department of Music. Middlebury students passing through the halls may have heard horn sounds in unison emanating through the backstage of Robison Hall, where the esteemed German singer and brass quartet were rehearsing for their performance on Friday, April 7.

Leading up to the show, Middlebury music students were graced by the group's talents in personal workshops. Bleckmann and The Westerlies organized a brief teaser of their show for Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Kyle Saulnier's class, "American Popular Music," at 8:15 a.m., walking in with an enthusiasm that contrasted the usual level of alertness of college kids attending morning classes.

The group's current project on tour — based on their 2021 album "This Land" — reimagines and rearranges traditional American protest music, including songs by folk legend Woody Guthrie, who was a dogged advocate for socialism and anti-fascism in the early 20th century.

> The performance merged modern sensibilities with the hard-nosed, pro-union attitude

Saulnier's course features Guthrie's music in a unit on folk music, analyzing his impact on American social movements and the development of the American folk tradition. For example, Bob Dylan is famously inspired by Guthrie's personal convictions and authentic way of singing.

Jon Jon March '23.5 remarked on what it felt like to witness meaningful musicianship in a class. "To see them all work in coordination with each other while not overpowering [Bleckmann's] voice — only projected through a tiny amplifier — took evident consideration and skill," said March, who was moved by the social bent of the Westerlies' music.

Consisting of two trumpeters (Riley Mulherkar and Chloe Rowlands) and two trombonists (Andy Clausen and Willem de Koch), the Westerlies shared their musical expertise with the college's brass quintet, coaching them on breathing techniques and taking charge of their instruments. Asher Holton '24.5, who plays tuba in the ensemble, was starstruck during the masterclass.

"The Westerlies were an incredible group to get to play with and learn from," Holton said. "It's as if they were able to read each other's minds. They encouraged us to take risks and put ourselves out there."

Such is an ethos for the Westerlies, who took their own risks in Friday's performance by playing songs full of both earnest and irreverent political critique. Two of Guthrie's more satirical tunes, "Tear the Fascists Down" and "The Jolly Banker," served as brief brass interludes between longer pieces which centered Bleckmann's vocals.

> "The Westerlies were an incredible group to get to play with and learn from."

Along with their American standards were original arrangements and compositions, one of which was Bleckmann's song "Another Holiday," which he wrote in response to the mass shooting in 2016 at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla. Rather than explicitly referring to the tragedy in the lyrics, Bleckmann wrote about the common experience of returning to family gatherings, as was clear in the line of the song referring to being "isolated from your family because of whom you love."

Standing in front of his harmonically rich and tonally refined brass group, Bleckmann was able to actualize his lucid emotions, using pedal technology to loop and to distort his voice, resulting in ethereal soundscapes.

The performance merged modern sensibilities with the hard-nosed, pro-union attitude of a distant time in American history, where Guthrie and the American labor movement played a significant role in the political discourse of the Great Depression and post-Depression year. The Westerlies seek to teach history through sonic imagination, simultaneously revering and altering the musical forms which embody protest.

After the show, Bleckmann and the Westerlies met audience members outside of Robison Hall, selling their most recent LP, "Move," featuring a namesake track which they debuted at Friday's show.

NER OUT LOUD MAKES A BOLD RETURN AFTER A THREE-YEAR HIATUS

By KATE SADOFF
Layout Editor

Courtesy Photo

NER Out Loud, a collaboration between the New England Review (NER), Oratory Now and the Mahaney Arts Center, returned on March 30 after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. Students, faculty and community members gathered to watch Oratory Now students perform live readings from NER issues spanning the past three years.

In the tradition of NPR's "Selected Shorts," NER Out Loud began with the aim of bringing pieces from the "New England Review" literary journal to life. Oratory Now — a student-driven program providing training in oral expression — became an avenue for students to present the pieces in a way that highlights their original themes while breathing new, personal meanings into each work.

Nine students shared the dance theater stage, each performing works across a variety of genres. Pieces included "Supernova" from NER Volume 43 No. 2, a short story by Kosiso Ugwueze who recently received NER's Award for Emerging Writers, John Cotter's monologue "Lemon Fresh" from NER 43.4 and Rosalie Moffett's poem "Hysterosalpingography" from NER 43.1, among others.

Isaiah (Izzo) Lizardi '25, an Oratory Now coach, performed Ajibola Lizardi's poem "Commutative Properties of Black Bodies" originally published in NER 42.4. Lizardi spoke to the power of engaging with the poem and its resonance when performed aloud.

"I was told the moment I picked up the poem it was one of the more complicated pieces. I had to be strong, certain, and vulnerable, but fragile and open-minded at the same time. I practiced and practiced with Dana Yeaton, and grew more comfortable with this hard topic and poem," Lizardi said.

"I was passionate and honored to represent Oratory Now, Ajibola Tolase and people of color all around the world that honestly face problems like this on a day-to-day basis. I just wanted everyone to feel me a bit, to understand what it is like. Presenting this poem was bigger than me."

Following readings by Oratory Now students, participants and audience members were invited to a "S'more Readings" reception, in which student writers were given the opportunity to share their own work over dessert and coffee. Students shared fresh works taking many forms in true New England Review fashion; its mission states that the publication strives to capture "[a] vital snapshot of the literary moment, four times a year, in its richness, complexity, and diversity." Yardena Carmi '23, a former NER intern, reflected on what it was like to read her poems in the NER Out Loud forum.

"Sharing my work in such a supportive environment was a lovely experience. I remember going to the last NER Out Loud before Covid-19 during my freshman year and feeling very inspired by the creativity on display. Being able to attend again and hear talented student performers and writers, as well as read my own writing, was a fun little full-circle moment for me," Carmi said.

Founded in 1978 by Jay Parini, professor and author, and Sydney Lea, former Middlebury professor and Vermont Poet Laureate, the New England Review has gained notoriety as one of the top literary magazines in the country, named no. 4 by Every Writer in 2022. The quarterly, published by Middlebury College, offers students opportunities to enter the literary world through internship programs, student submissions reading groups, and events such as NER Out Loud and NER Front Row.

On May 4, the New England Review will present NER Front Row, a reading series providing students the opportunity to engage with established writers. The event will begin with a student performance, followed by the author's reading of the same piece and a conversation between the two, culminating in a broad Q&A moderated by NER editors. Jenn Shapland '08, Middlebury alumna and National Book Award finalist, will be the featured author, reading from her latest book "Thin Skin." The event will be held on Zoom at 8 p.m.

Students interested in participating in NER Front Row can contact NER managing editor Leslie Sainz lsainz@middlebury.edu for more information.

The senior spring bucket list and the college on the hill

By ELIZA KING FREEDMAN
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Couresy of Molly Grazioso & Eliza King Freedman

The Gorge (top) and the summit of Snake Mountain (bottom) are quintessential Middlebury student spots.

The creation of a senior spring bucket list is an equally exciting and daunting task facing the students who will graduate this May. Whether it comes in the form of a mental to-do list or a printed poster hanging on a suite wall, we are all looking for a way to say goodbye.

I, for one, am freaking out about graduating.

I thought having a post-grad plan (better yet, one that is within driving distance of Middlebury) would make the concept of leaving feel more digestible, but it hasn't. And to those who tell me they are so ready to leave (the very same people whose faces I lie to as I groan in feigned agreement), I applaud you. But I'm spending my senior spring wishing someone would Bill Murray me and let me relive these days over and over again. So consider this an embarrassingly sappy love letter to my favorite place, in the form of a list of all of the things that we need to do before we leave — with contributions from alumni who are inevitably missing the Green Mountains.

In response to a Campus social media blast requesting senior spring must-dos, a *shocking* volume of alumni wrote in with various required hikes. Among the most recommended was Camel's Hump, a 6-mile out-and-back trail that I have never attempted but which I assume is not for the faint of heart. And for those more amateur hikers who are seeking a good view over a good sweat, the Snake Mountain hike prevails.

Ted Parker '08 suggested that students "cliff dive" at Bristol Falls. And for students who may be intimidated by the 20-foot jump there, the Gorge on the way to the Snow Bowl offers a much tamer, closer-to-10-foot jump. Others wrote in to send students to Lake Dunmore and Falls of Lana, two slightly more relaxing spring swimming spots.

Alumni also remind us to thank the staff and faculty members who have made our time here all that it has been. Regardless of what these four years have been to each of us individually, it cannot be overstated that a "thank you" goes a long way. All of us graduating this spring experienced not just the Covid-19 send-home of our freshman year but also the locked-down Covid-19 Middlebury of our sophomore year. Our mere being on campus that year was made possible specifically by the Custodial Services staff and by the time that they put in to give us our college experiences back.

The stand-out alumni write-in, however, was not one telling students to rush outside and do everything they could before leaving. Rather, Michael Gaskin '11 wrote that students had to add reading "The College on the Hill," a book about Dartmouth College, to their bucket list.

What initially seemed like a joke poking fun at how many students at Middlebury claim to have initially applied to Dartmouth is in fact a genuine suggestion to read a book that is entirely applicable to Middlebury and all that it is. "The College on the Hill" begins with a discussion of what a liberal arts education means, and — though we may think we get it at this point — the words hit home.

"[College is] the growing realization that knowledge is a process and not a fixed thing," writes author Ralph Nading Hill. Such a statement is comforting at this point in our career: it's all a process. The ultimate higher ground of knowledge that I, at least, have been under the impression that we are supposed to have reached by now might not even exist at all.

And, to skip ahead, the "Students" section of the book resonates as well. Published in 1964, "The College on the Hill" features dialogue among students who didn't do their readings, who are homesick — who are just kids, just like we are.

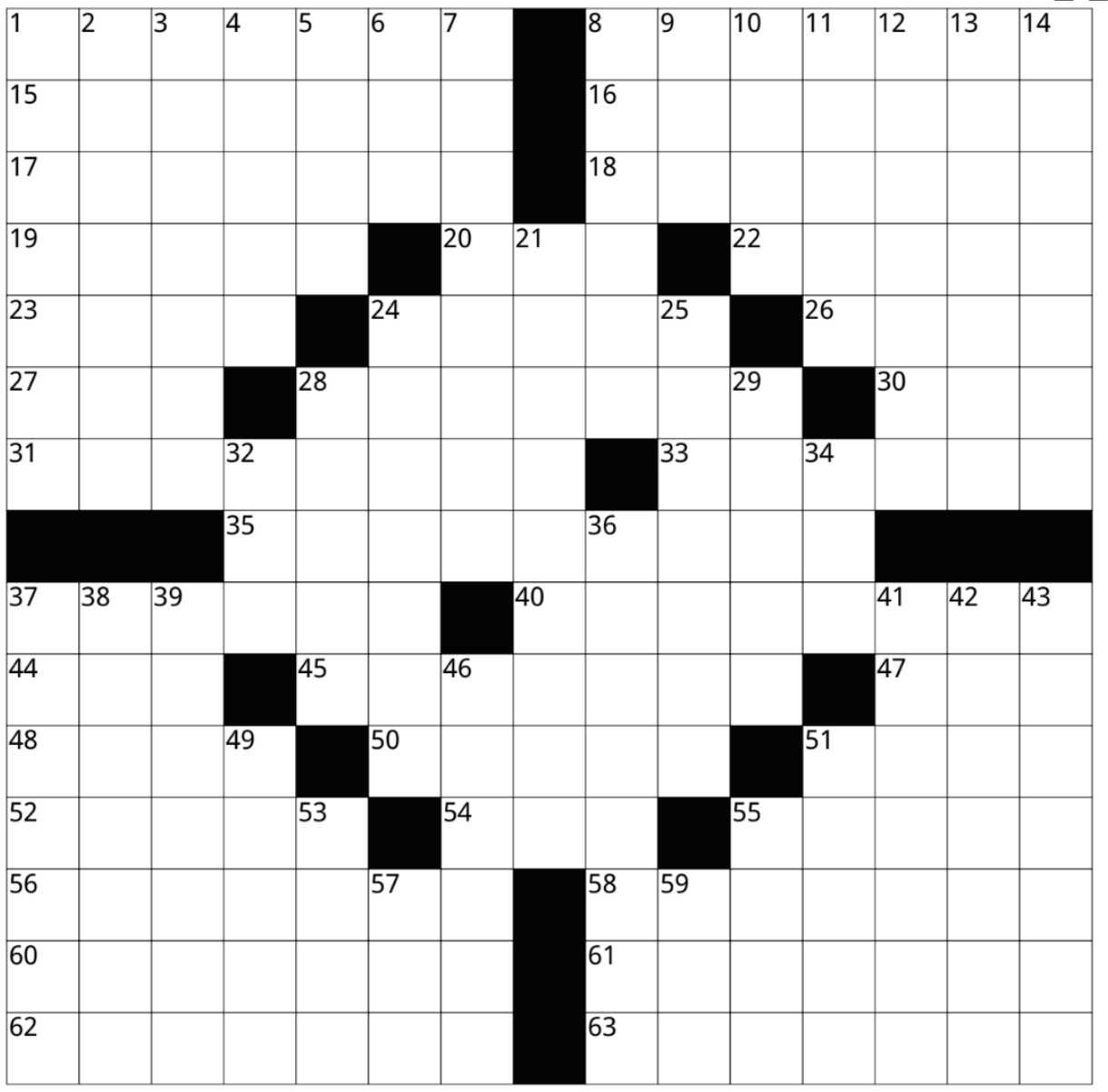
The book is grounding in that it shows us that wherever we go, Middlebury will still be here to come back to (or to not come back to). And while progress and change at the institution will be an inevitable good thing, this place is not going anywhere. New students that are just like we once were will take our places, and we will carry on too.

So what should you put on your senior bucket list? Definitely some hikes. Definitely some swimming holes. You should read "The College on the Hill." You could make a last-ditch effort at reviving the "Like a Prayer" tradition (a somewhat contentious suggestion made by a variety of alumni). An anonymous current senior has declared that they would like to have sex at the Knoll before their graduation day — you can get as creative as you'd like. The only truly uniting sentiment behind the recommendations that The Campus received was the uniqueness and individuality of what people consider sacred as they reflect on their college experiences.

As much as I hate to say it, we are in the last leg of Middlebury. And we are ready for whatever comes next — even those of us who feel like we definitely are not. So put whatever you want on your senior bucket list, but I can say for sure that I am better off having seen a Snake Mountain sunset.

CROSSWORD FOR YOU!!!

By WILLIAM REED
Layout Editor



Across

1 Jack Kerouac's second language
8 Top-tier celeb
15 Mythological German maiden said to sit atop a rock at the edge of the Rhine
16 Open-faced slice topped with a savory spread
17 One in a multi-baby baby carriage
18 Ones who nurture children or animals
19 Professor Lupin's first name
20 N95s and respirators, e.g.
22 Bother persistently
23 Boxers Muhammad and Laila
24 Albino in "The Da Vinci Code"
26 Rallying cry for some Republicans
27 Rink surface
28 Rest on
30 La Méditerranée, e.g.
31 It's what you'd expect
33 Most recent
35 Antebellum Kansas, notably
37 Hummus variety sold in many grocery stores (plural)
40 One hiding in the cushions?
44 ___-la-la
45 Cell division
47 Typographical error of "own" that has come to have a new meaning
48 Slippery fishes
50 Buenos ___
51 "Dogs"
52 Golfer shirts
54 Poetic contraction
55 West African language closely related to Fula
56 Pertaining to a type of foot pain
58 Do an impression of
60 "Piece of cake!"
61 Winning candidate
62 Recorded again
63 Some relieved people

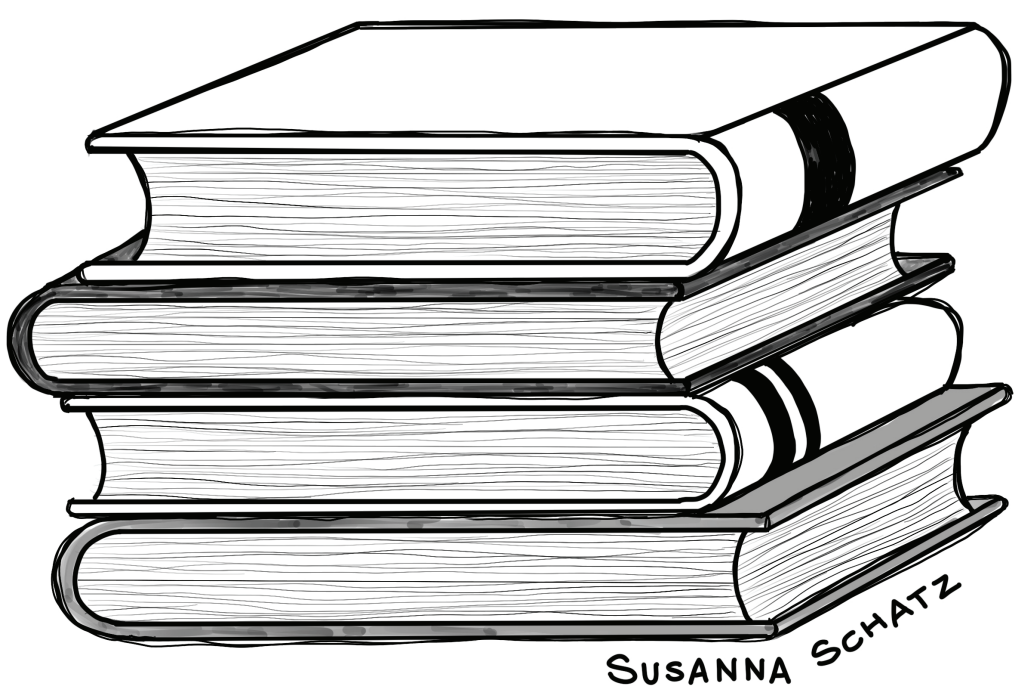
Down

1 Ways to get around in Chicago
2 Electric shaver brand
3 More in need of a bath or shower, say
4 Hare constellation
5 Misfortunes
6 "Get it?"
7 Piece of journalism meant to attack or discredit
8 "You're in for ___!"
9 Papua New Guinea port
10 Persia, today
11 Hall of Fame football coach Hank
12 No-win situation in sports, often
13 Infuriates
14 Go back to square one
21 Google's marketplace for downloading apps on Android devices
24 Polish region along the Oder River
25 Latin for "of the sun"
28 West Coast NFLer
29 Savory spreads
32 Plant owner: Abbr.
34 President pro ___
36 "White Lotus" or "Big Little Lies"
37 Show horse
38 Biological name for nipples (plural)
39 Ship stabilizer
41 Do surgery
42 Social media user who posts short messages
43 Main courses
46 In layers
49 "Crime and Punishment" heroine
51 Game played with a dog
53 "Cut it out!"
55 Victory, in German
57 Hydrocarbon suffix
59 Year in Edward the Confessor's reign

NICHE READS: NOVEL READS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJORS

By SYLVIE SHURE
Opinions Editor

If you struggle to find time for fun reading, this is the spot for you. Niche Reads recommends novels that relate to academic (or other) interests so that you can explore a new book while still feeling productive. Check back each week for more cool books.



Middlebury was the first college to offer environmental studies as an undergraduate major, so it's only fair to offer current majors some book recommendations! Although these books by no means represent the entirety of the climate crisis (in fact, all three happen to focus on the American South), they do provide heart-wrenching insights into the relationship between the earth and humanity, which can apply to people everywhere.

"How Strange a Season" by Megan Mayhew Bergman:

Written by Middlebury's own Megan Mayhew Bergman, "How Strange a Season" is a beautiful and haunting collection of short stories that focus on gender, history and climate. From the culinary benefits of the invasive lionfish to an obsessive urge to fill a terrarium with endangered flowers, these stories deftly explore the environmental reckoning that humanity collectively faces.

In addition to being a Middlebury Assistant Professor of English and the Director of the Breadloaf Environmental Writers Conference, Mayhew Bergman is an environmental journalist, and the climate crisis pervades every story in this collection. The urgency conveyed in her work is gripping, and the strength of her characters is inspiring.

Because it's a collection of short stories and not a novel, "How Strange a Season" is ideal for the busy college student. Each story is compelling and can be read independently, so readers don't need to commit to the whole book at once. Once you start, though, you might find it hard to stop!

You should read this book if you are interested in historical legacy, if you like reading about interesting mother-daughter relationships or if you love rich prose.

"The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry:

This collection of poems by the legendary Wendell Berry beautifully explores the relationship between people and the land they inhabit. Berry writes with a remarkable sensitivity to the earth, and his poems will send you outside with a new respect for the tranquility and beauty of the natural world.

While many people find poetry intimidating, Berry's writing is easy to dig into, and the simple beauty of it is undeniable. Although this book is dated in some ways, particularly in its attitudes toward gender, it is prescient in its relationship to the environment. Berry's insistence on tending to the land rather than giving into despair is a welcome reminder for us all.

These poems advocate for a deep connection between humanity and nature, and through their gorgeous language, deep admiration and biting urgency, they make a compelling case. Far from the dense and intimidating conception many have of poetry, these poems are elegant in their simplicity, making them as meaningful as they are readable.

You should read this book if you want to start reading more poetry, if you enjoy descriptive nature writing or if you are looking for a meditative read.

"Strange as this Weather Has Been" by Ann Pancake:

In a small West Virginia town, the introduction of mountaintop removal mining has become the cause for constant fear of a deadly flood. As townspeople watch their beloved mountains die, their houses fall apart and their jobs disappear, they must choose between staying in an increasingly bleak setting and leaving the land that has always sustained them.

With vivid natural descriptions, Pancake makes clear the immediacy of this environmental threat. She explores the social and ecological impacts of destructive mining practices with ruthless clarity, and her unforgettable characters maintain the book's heart.

From its beautiful and loving descriptions of the mountains themselves to the horrifying destruction wrought by the mines, "Strange as this Weather Has Been" is a book you will feel deeply, and one that will inspire any reader to action.

You should read this book if you are interested in the climate crisis as a social phenomenon, if you enjoy reading about family dynamics or if you want to be swept up in a gripping story.

MIDDLEBURY SAILING TEAM BEGINS THEIR SPRING SEASON

Courtesy photo

Members of the sailing team on Lake Champlain.

By TING CUI
Contributing Writer

The Middlebury College sailing team rang in the spring season with sailors traveling all across New England to compete at various regattas.

The sailing team, composed of around 25 members, competes in the New England Intercollegiate Sailing Association (NEISA), a division of the Intercollegiate Sailing Association (ICSA). If weather conditions allow, the team typically travels and competes at regattas each weekend against other schools in the region. The team's spring season started the weekend of March 12, and this past weekend, Middlebury sailors competed in the Alymers Trophy hosted at Salve Regina University in Providence, R.I.

"Overall, we feel decent about this regatta," said team commodore Will Procter '24. "Even though we didn't place well, everyone was happy with their performances."

Spring season runs until early May for the sailing team, but most sailors are yet to practice in the water due to frozen waters at Hopper Family Sailing Pavilion on Lake Champlain. Despite this challenge, the entrance of new coach Matt Harrison has the team buzzing about their prospects this season.

> "We're just all really excited to get practicing because for pretty much all of 2022 we couldn't practice any drills, so nothing really improved."

"We're just all really excited to get practicing, because for pretty much all of 2022 we couldn't practice any drills, so nothing really improved," Procter said. "It was like if we could get out on the water and even just sail around back and forth, it was a success for us since it was just ourselves running practices."

Their previous coach resigned suddenly to pursue another job in the winter of 2021–22, and since then filling the role has proven difficult. The team spent the past two seasons without a coach, and is now rebuilding their team following the Covid-19 pandemic.

"This is our first semester with our new coach. The past two semesters, last spring and the fall, we didn't have a coach so we were coaching ourselves as well. We had to be in charge of everything that a coach is in charge of like safety, managing practices, trailing boats, organizing regattas," said vice commodore Annabelle Wyman '24.5. "We're very happy to have Matt now."

They plan to compete at three more weekends of regattas this season, including the 2023 Little 3 Regatta hosted by Middlebury on April 29.

"I'm looking forward to the Little 3 Regatta in particular since I think that our sailing venue is one of the nicest around, and it's fun to show it off to the other teams," said Will Tella '25, a sailor on the team.

The sailing team hosts a regatta each spring and fall, but canceled their fall event due to a lack of wind, resulting in the loss of a tremendous effort put forth by parent volunteers, coaches from other schools and the team itself.

Despite the competitiveness of sailing, the team welcomes newcomers and less experienced racers.

"Whether you have raced competitively for years or just want to get on the water to experience Lake Champlain, there is opportunity for everyone on campus to get involved, both throughout the fall and spring," sailor Will Levy '25.5 said. "The racing team competes in a highly competitive environment comparable to other Midd athletic teams, however, there are numerous opportunities for sailors of all skill levels and interests."

Sailing holds recreational sails every Friday at their facility for those with no prior experience. They provide equipment needed for students and encourage everyone on campus to engage. Those interested can fill out an interest form at go/ahoy.

Baseball battles, but falls short in home opener

Courtesy of Steve Malley

Kyle McCausland '25 had nine RBIs in Middlebury's final game of the weekend against Wesleyan. Emory.

By RYAN HEINZERLING
Sports Editor

With warm temperatures finally melting out Forbes Field, the baseball team (12–6) opened up their first homestand of the year with a tough 9–8 loss to Wesleyan University (9–10) in a 10-inning affair.

Alex Price '23 took the mound for the Panthers and made history despite his uneven performance. His 11 strikeouts over five and two-thirds innings moved him into a fourth place tie on Middlebury's all time strikeout list (167 career K's).

Although Price generated plenty of whiffs, he also gave up five earned runs on two home runs, four hits and four walks. Midd's offense backed him up with power of their own as Alec Ritch '23 homered in the third inning to put the Panthers up 3–1. That put Ritch at fifth all-time on the Middlebury home run list with 13 career dingers.

The teams were neck-in-neck until the top of the ninth when the Cardinals scored on a wild pitch to take an 8–6 lead. Facing defeat, Midd's offense rallied in the bottom of the frame with back to back walks and a single from Beau Root '24. Kyle McCausland '25 singled to left to bring home the tying runs and send the game to extras.

Despite the heroics, the Cardinals nudged forward again on an RBI single from Kyle Sylvester, and the Panthers bats went quiet in bottom of the 10th.

Forbes Field proved to be an important factor for the prolific success of the 2022 team as the Panthers went 14–2 in home games, leading them to their second NESCAC Championship. The team looks to repeat their success at home this season.

> The team rebounded on Saturday to split their double header with Wesleyan, but ultimately lost an important series against a division rival. With a 1-2 divisional record, the Panthers now face an uphill climb from fourth place in the NESCAC.

The team rebounded on Saturday to split their doubleheader with Wesleyan, but ultimately lost an important series against a division rival. With a 1–2 divisional record, the Panthers now face an uphill climb from fourth place in the NESCAC. The pitching staff's 5.33 earned run average hamstrung the team in the first two games of the series (especially game two where the Cardinals rallied for four runs in the top of the seventh), but they came back big to win 23–2 on the same formula from last year: effective pitching and a massive offensive outburst. McCausland had a school-record nine RBIs in Middlebury's win in the second game of the doubleheader.

The team remains at home this weekend where they will play Hamilton (13–8) in a three game series. The team will play one game Friday at 4:00 p.m. and a doubleheader on Saturday starting at noon.

PFL Weekly

By BLAISE SIEFER, ELI DIBARI, MARCO FENGLER, CAPTAIN RUDOLPH
Podcast Hosts

Attacker Russell Thorndike '25 leads men's lacrosse in points as the team climbs into the top five nationally. This week, PFL interviews Thorndike about his journey to Midd, what has driven the team's success and what he participates in at Middlebury outside of lacrosse. Thorndike gets put to the test with some lacrosse team trivia, and Marco drops another one of his famous guarantees. This one's a must listen!

PFL WEEKLY

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